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The Inward Light

The Inward Light

BY

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PROBLEMS," "THE GROWING REVELATION,"
"MESSAGES OF THE MASTERS," ETC.



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TO

THE MEMBERS OF MY OWN FAMILY

WHOSE DEVOTED AFFECTION AND GRACIOUS MINISTRIES

HAVE BRIGHTENED MANY AN HOUR OF DARKNESS

AND ADDED JOY TO MANY A DAY OF LABOR

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

THIS book is a growth. It is the fruit of a somewhat extended study of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. A treatise on that doctrine it surely is not, but it shows where one man has been led who has made it the rule of his thinking to follow the Leadership of the Spirit.

This volume is a series of essays. Each chapter starts from the same point as every other, but each one is independent of the others. The names of three chapters give a hint as to the purpose of the whole book, viz., *The Inward Light*, *The Immanent God*, and *The Continuous Leadership of the Spirit*.

The teaching of the book may be condensed as follows:

There is in every man light sufficient to disclose all the truth that is needed for the purposes of life;

That light is from God who dwells in humanity

Preface

as He is immanent in the universe; therefore the source of authority is to be found within the soul and not in external authority of church, or creed or book:

That light being Divine must be continuous; it will never fail; it will lead into all truth and show things to come; and it may be implicitly trusted.

Two chapters of this book require a word of explanation. That on The Continuous Leadership of the Spirit, in a slightly different form, was delivered before the National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States, at Des Moines, Iowa, in October, 1904, as the Moderator's Address; that on the Creeds in substance appeared in my previous volume, "The Growing Revelation," which is now out of print. It is here revised and condensed.

It ought to be said, perhaps, that nearly all of my chapters were written before Sabatier's volume, "The Religions of Authority versus The Religion of the Spirit," appeared. His great work has confirmed me in my own convictions

Preface

which, while they are substantially the same as his, were reached along a different path.

I would have no word or thought of mine lessen in the least the reverence due to the Church, the Bible, and the witness of history to the truth, but I can make the words of Whittier my own:

*“ We fast and plead, we weep and pray,
From morning until even ;
We feel to find the holy way,
We knock at the gate of heaven ;
And when in silent awe we wait,
And word and sign forbear,
The hinges of the Golden Gate
Move soundless to our prayer !
Who hears the eternal harmonies
Can heed no outward word ;
Blind to all else is he who sees
The Vision of the Lord.”*

AMORY H. BRADFORD.

July 4, 1905.



CONTENTS

I. THE INWARD LIGHT	<i>Page</i> 3
II. THE IMMANENT GOD	31
III. SPIRIT AND LIFE	59
IV. THE INWARD SINAI	83
V. THE SANCTITY OF DUTY	109
VI. THE INWARD CALVARY	133
VII. THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY	155
VIII. THE ULTIMATE STANDARD	179
IX. THE BIBLES OF THE WORLD	205
X. THE CREEDS	229
XI. HINDRANCES TO SPIRITUAL VISION	259
XII. CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT	283
XIII. THE CONTINUOUS LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	305
XIV. PERSONALITY A PROPHECY	333
INDEX	357

The Inward Light

CHAPTER FIRST

The Inward Light



OR many years, and for many centuries, men have been taught to look for the ultimate authority in their thinking and living to some one or to some writings or to some institution outside of themselves. The supremacy and sanctity of the State or of the Church, of some sacred book or of some holy man or of some doctrinal standards, has been emphasized, while but few have caught glimpses of the clearer light which shines within the human soul, and still fewer have dared to think of it as evidence of the divine indwelling, or even as the medium of a divine revelation. Almost alone, the Society of Friends has ventured to assert this truth, and to teach it as an article of religious faith. It has remained for the twentieth century to give to the Inward

The Inward Light

Light the attention which it deserves. Formerly it was left to mystics of various schools, and even recently it has been suspected of being "new theology," and has been regarded as a source of various inoffensive heresies, when it has not been denounced as an enemy of the Christian Church. But, happily, the days in which men have maintained a fearful attitude toward knowledge are passing away. Truth needs no defence; it cannot fail in due time to command attention and loyalty. The first inquiry formerly was, Does a doctrine conform to the standards? Now the question is, Are the standards themselves reliable? Inquirers were then taught that articles of faith should be accepted because they could be supported by texts from the Bible; now they are learning that the religious teachings of the Bible are trustworthy not because of what they claim for themselves, but because they have been found to be eternally true. In former days men were told that they should reverence one day in seven because that duty was

The Inward Light

in the commandments ; but now it has been discovered that the need, and therefore the duty, of such observances was written, in the nature of things, centuries—possibly millenniums—before the law was graven in stone. The light within, in the long period before Moses, revealed the essential human condition, and the best way to supply what it lacked. The Inward Light is as old as the existence of man as a personality. The study of it is interesting, and may be pursued by all who will patiently observe the awful and beautiful phenomena of human existence and measure their significance. The subject should be approached with the method of the psychologist rather than with that of the theologian. It is a question of fact, not of proof-texts, inasmuch as the value of the proof-texts depends on its endorsement.

What is the meaning of the phrase, the Inward Light? It signifies that within every man there is One who reveals, as sufficient guide for all the necessities of man's condition, truth so far as it is requisite for him to

The Inward Light

know it. The Apostle John wrote, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and need not that any man should teach you" (I John ii, 20). This text fails to apply to every one merely for the reason that in many persons the organs of spiritual vision have been so systematically obscured that they need to have the filth removed from the eyes of their spirits before those eyes can see in the Light within. The Quakers express their belief as follows: "The one cornerstone of belief upon which the Society of Friends is built is the conviction that God does indeed communicate with each one of the spirits, He has made in a direct and living inbreathing of some measure of the breath of His own life; and He never leaves Himself without a witness in the heart, as well as in the surroundings of man; that the measure of light, life, or grace thus given increases by obedience." ("Quaker Strongholds," C. E. Stephen, p. 20.)

George Fox, the chief prophet of the Society of Friends, is spoken of as follows: "God did teach him by His Spirit. The light shone in

The Inward Light

his soul and he saw the truth. He did not get it from the Bible, though it was there. He knew it first by revelation, and then, with the revelation enlightening him, he could see the truth in the Scriptures. This is his doctrine of the Inward Light" ("The Quakers," Turner, p. 335.)

There is light within every man, which so illuminates his mind as to make it capable of discerning reality. Light illuminates and has power. This Inward Light reveals what is true in the Bible, in all other books, in man, and in the universe; also it creates the desire to do the things which it reveals to be right. It is more than reason; it is the medium in which the soul sees, or, perhaps, it is the soul seeing in its own light. It is more than conscience, for conscience is reaction against wrong, or affirmation of the sanctity of right; whereas this light is a revealer of truth. This is the meaning of the teaching of Jesus concerning the Holy Spirit. There is light in all human beings; it is an essential of a true humanity; it is not known that any normal

The Inward Light

man has ever been without it; that light is sufficient to show every one all of truth and all of duty that is needed. By that light one is able to discern the difference between truth and error, between what is temporal and what is eternal in the Bible and in the creeds, and to determine what in them is from man and what from God: it enables him to discriminate between what is of local and what of universal application; and, if he be obedient to the heavenly vision, he may sometime discover truths which the world needs, but of which it has never yet dreamed. The light in all other men, in its essence, is the same as that which shone in the minds of Isaiah, Paul, and John. They saw more than ordinary men see, not because they had different light, but because they observed more carefully what the common light revealed. Let no one shrink from the logical result of this teaching. It means that those who will, may see, to the fulness of their finite powers, truth and duty as God sees them, and may thus be more sure of His mind and will than

The Inward Light

they would be if an audible voice should speak to them.

How do we know that there is any such Light?

It is one thing to discern the light, and another to be sure that it is a ray from the Divine Sun. This inquiry deserves a candid answer. The two questions suggested we will consider separately. How do we know that the Inward Light is a reality? For the present let us leave all books and teachers and authorities, and turn our eyes inward. I shall try to do that, and I trust that my readers will do the same. As I scrutinize my own personality, I find that it is a composite into which have gone inherited traits, the influence of environment, the teaching of parents and professors, the messages of preachers, and most of all the ethical and spiritual ideals of the Christian religion. It is difficult to separate and to give due credit to the various forces which have moulded character and made it what it is. But let me try to get back of all the influences which have helped to make me what I am. As I push my inquiry,

The Inward Light

I find that, so long as I can remember, there has been within me ability to discern the difference between truth and error and between right and wrong; also I find that there has always been something within showing me that truth and right are more desirable than error and wrong. Moreover, I see clearly that that something is unchanged in the midst of all the changes of opinion as to what constitutes truth and duty, and that it is not affected by outward conditions. And I observe that, in proportion as I have chosen right and truth, my ability to discern them has been enlarged and my satisfaction in them has increased. And I have observed, still further, that just so far as I have followed what has been inwardly revealed to me as truth and duty, I have found myself in substantial harmony with all others who have been true to their inner vision. I do not mean that all have come to the same conclusions in detail, but I do mean that in a general way there is harmony as to spiritual verities and ethical ideals between all who walk in this Light. Further, I

The Inward Light

observe that in such degrees as I have obeyed the revelations of duty which have come to me, my conviction as to what duty is has become clearer, and the desire to do the right more imperative. Thus much now is evident. There is within me, therefore presumptively in every man, light sufficient to make the needful truth and duty evident, and also to create an impulse toward them which, if obeyed, would result in a perfect man; for what is a perfect man except one who is loyal both to truth and to duty?

Thus I find within myself the Inward Light, and I find that it has been there as long as I can remember. I am therefore forced to believe that it is as old as my being. And what I have discovered in myself, I find that others, who have made the same study, have also discovered in themselves. I am thus compelled to believe that this light is not isolated, but is essential in the human personality. Whence did this light come? The answer to that question is for our faith. The longer I meditate on this inquiry the denser the darkness

The Inward Light

becomes if it is separated from the intuition of God. The inquiry leads back to that primal mystery which concerns the genesis of man and the union of spirit and body. Philosophic speculation has loved this subject, but its conclusions have been as various as the thinkers. Some regard it simply as a result of evolution. They say that the cosmic process has merely produced a being possessing spiritual vision, and that this strange and almost preternatural faculty has grown out of most unpromising soil. I know not. There is another answer which does not contradict, but which rather supplements and clarifies the former. It is given in the Christian Scriptures. The Apostle John in his Gospel speaks of "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (chap. i, 9). These words distinctly confirm the truth which the study of the human personality discloses.

Paul, writing of his own work as an apostle, said: "By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Corinthians iv, 2).

The Inward Light

In other words, there is a something in every man which responds to truth when the man and the truth are brought together. Jesus said that when He should go away the Spirit of Truth would lead into all truth, and show things to come (John xvi, 13).

The Christian revelation affirms that God is in every human soul, and that the quickness with which we turn toward truth and right are the response of God to His own. The Quaker doctrine of the Inward Light, then, is substantially the Christian doctrine of the Indwelling Spirit.

The reality of this light within is implied in the philosophical doctrine of the immanence of God, which means that in a certain real sense God is in all men. What is meant by the immanence of God? There would be various answers to that query, but I state the truth as follows: Personality is essentially divine; all persons in the unity of their self-consciousness are exactly like God; when I speak of God immanent in man I mean that personality is identically the same in man as

The Inward Light

in God. The same personality is in one as in the other; yet not in such a way as to destroy individuality.

An essential part of personality is light, considered as a medium of ethical and spiritual vision. This light is not merely outside, but is also within the personality, and essential to it. Ethical and spiritual personality knows itself as made for truth and right. This light is from God, because the personality to which the light is essential is from God. All I really care to affirm thus far is that we are conscious of an Indwelling Light, fully adequate to all human life's needs; a light which precedes any distinctly Christian or religious experience, which surely, though in varying degree, reveals truth and impels toward righteousness; and that at the lips of Jesus that light is called the Spirit of Truth, and by modern philosophy is regarded as God immanent in the soul of man.

Another equally obvious fact is that this light is dependent on the human element in the personality for opportunity to shine. Light

The Inward Light

always takes the color of the medium through which it passes. If the mind is open and the heart unpolluted, the light is clear. The worst of men has the light in his soul, but because his mind and affections are vile he sees with a dimmed and distorted vision.

Mrs. Browning has finely said: "Only the good discern the good." Like discerns like. The day is the same for the man who goes out to corrupt innocence, and for the one who gives himself to protect the weak. The Bible is the same whether it is read or ignored. Truth is not changed by being neglected. One man uses the light for evil and another for good, but that which irradiates the minds of both is the same. Every man may discern truth, but not a few blind their eyes by greed or vice. If you will study your own mental processes, you will find that your views of truth are vivid or dim according as you have looked upon the facts of life in "the light which lighteth every man," or in the shadow cast by your own selfishness. If we ask, What is true? we seldom wait long

The Inward Light

for a satisfying response; but if we ask what we would like to have true, the answer will vary with our moods. The tendency to seek that which will please rather than that which is right, increases with every choice of evil, and the result is moral and spiritual blindness. But absence of the power of seeing does not imply absence of light. The sun is not eclipsed when one puts out his eyes. Those whom we call heathen have light, and may use it aright, but they have been trained to interpret facts in one way; the same facts are given a different interpretation by us because we have been accustomed to look at them from a different point of view. This is a great lesson. Light is one, but individuals differ; and the same duties and events, seen in the one light, will appear differently to different persons. Difference of vision, and of interpretation, are not to be dreaded; this only is to be dreaded—the possibility of approaching any fact with a corrupt rather than a pure intellect, and a selfish rather than a loving heart.

The Inward Light

The universality of the Inward Light is the basis of universal responsibility for beliefs. No one needs to believe that which is false. Every one may know as much truth as is requisite for him. Not all will have equal knowledge for, while the light shines in all, all eyes are not equally strong. But I love to think, as think I may, that those who are in heathen lands, and those who are shut out of religious privileges, and those who have learned to hate the churches because of some hard or cruel teaching they may have heard there, may still find the truth. The brightest light is within themselves. If any are really heathenish and irreligious, it is not merely because they have never heard of the Christ, or do not know the Bible, or have turned away from the churches, but because they do not use the light within, which all have. Is the question again raised, How may we use that light? The answer is, All do use it who obey the impulse which bids them to seek for reality and to be satisfied with nothing less, whatever the cost and whatever the apparent sacri-

The Inward Light

fice. The light is limited neither by nationality nor by creed. It is within every human being. The peril is that it may be obscured by having to shine through a lecherous mind or a selfish heart.

Men are responsible for their beliefs, because each one has all the light that he requires for the purposes of living. It is not so important that we seek for a true creed as that we endeavor to keep our minds open and our hearts pure. A trustworthy creed is an impossibility for all who force reason and the moral sense to express themselves through a corrupt medium. Those who are true to the Inward Light are always truth-loving and good. This Inward Light has been called the Spiritual Christ as well as the Holy Spirit. It matters little what names be given to this superlative spiritual reality. This we know, for both consciousness and observation clearly teach it, in the universal light God is disclosed and duty is clear. Every soul has a Bible, which, if it were read with due consideration, would speak of heaven and holiness.

The Inward Light

Our chief duty in this world is to keep the windows of our souls wide open, so that the light may stream in; and our eyes free from pollution, so that all objects may be seen in their proper proportions and relations.

We now approach another and equally important branch of the subject: What is the final authority in religion? This inquiry will be treated more at length in a subsequent chapter. A few suggestions will suffice here. Authority and standard are not the same. All Christians would agree in confessing that the final standard is Jesus Christ. He is the human ideal embodied. To be like Him is the end of endeavor. The realization of His character is the finest fruit of the religious life. But authority, in the present use of the word, is some power or person to which appeal may be made to determine the worth of an ideal or the value of a standard. When the Person of Jesus stands before us, what is it that prompts the approving response: He is the Perfect One, and all should seek to be like Him? In the Bible, some passages

The Inward Light

are of local and transient significance, and others of universal and eternal application. What makes these contrasts evident? To what tribunal may we appeal to determine for us what is true? Is the Bible an infallible authority? There is a prior and more important question: How may we learn whether it is trustworthy? Those who believe in the Bible do so for some good reason. They do not accept it as from God on its mere claim to be divine. The sacred books of other religions make that claim with equal insistence. Why is one religion regarded as divine and another as human? Moreover, the voices of preachers and teachers of all phases of faith make a Babel. Some of them attract us and some of them repel. To which shall we give hospitality? And yet, further, churches and theologians insist on the imperative importance of many diverse doctrines, all hallowed by centuries of devoted loyalty. Which shall be accepted? Or shall we dare to reject any? In other words, How may we determine what is true? I know no answer except this: We

The Inward Light

must trust the Spirit of God acting through man's rational and moral powers. This is the Inward Light—the light which lighteth every man. But, if possible, let us be still more definite. Why do we accept Jesus as the eternal ideal of humanity? Because when He stands in the Inward Light His perfection commands loyalty; there is no other court of final appeal.

Why do some reject the doctrine of everlasting punishment consciously endured? Because, when that doctrine is brought into the Inward Light, in spite of its advocacy by many godly men, it is seen to violate that which stands revealed of the character of God both in nature and in the Christian Scriptures. And why do we now turn from many of the moral standards of the period of the Exodus as barbaric? Because, when they are brought into the Inward Light, they are instinctively and instantly repudiated. But is there any clear principle which may be used to guide us in our search for reality and right? Is not the following answer both

The Inward Light

true and easily applicable? Whatever, when it is brought into the Inward Light, appears to the seeker after truth as worthy of God, may be accepted, and followed to the end without fear; while whatever violates his intuition concerning God should be rejected without hesitation.

But is not this forsaking the Christian teaching of the Mastership of Jesus Christ and the supremacy of the Bible? My reply is this: the fundamental doctrine of Christianity is that of the eternal being and work of the Holy Spirit. We have a Bible because it was inspired by the Spirit of God; we are able to come to something like confidence that we know what the Bible teaches because we trust the Spirit. When we remember that the Bible is written in a dead language; that it has had to be translated from a text which has been sadly, and in some parts almost hopelessly, corrupted; that the peculiarities of Oriental thought are hard for an Occidental to grasp; that the Book has been preserved in the midst of the vicissitudes of centuries

The Inward Light

of controversy and war, we shall readily see that it is to be trusted in its relation to human souls only as it is guaranteed by some authority outside itself. That guarantee is given by the Spirit of God in the spirit of man. This emphasis on the Inward Light does not discredit Jesus Christ as Master; rather, it provides the only trustworthy means of verifying the validity of His claims. In the Inner Light He stands crowned, and worthy of both loyalty and worship.

We are now face to face with a simple but superb fact: the holiest place for every man is within his own soul. It is more awful than the holy of holies in any temple. The Inward Sinai is more sacred than that Sinai of the desert which Moses climbed. Every moral law is written in our own being more clearly than the commandments of Moses were graven in stone. If we will but be honest and earnest, we shall find that we are carrying about within us the eternal principles of righteousness, from which no man can ever escape, the violation of which is sin. There-

The Inward Light

fore all who do wrong are without excuse. If we would know the truth, it is not necessary that we should read many books or listen to many teachers. Rather do we have need to enter into the inner silences and honestly ask what we find there. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and it is to the Holy Ghost who dwells in every man that we should listen. Those who give heed to Him will never be disappointed and never misled. A willingness to trust to Him, the present Light, the common source of revelation in all the ages, the author of the Bible, the author also of all the truth in all sacred books, and the inspirer of all heroisms, is the greatest need of this age, and, possibly, of any age.

The Quakers and many of the best of the mystics made much of the duty of being quiet in order that the soul may hear the divine voice. Fénelon says: "We must silence every creature, we must silence ourselves also, to hear in a profound stillness of the soul this inexpressible voice of Christ. The outward word of the Gospel itself without this living

The Inward Light

efficacious word within would be but an empty sound." (Quoted by Whittier, Introduction to "Journal of John Woolman," p. 49.)

And in "Religio Medici," Sir Thomas Brown says: "I am sure that there is a common spirit that plays within us, and that is the Spirit of God. Whoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of this Spirit, I dare not say he lives; for truly without this there is no heat under the tropics, nor any light, though I dwell in the body of the sun."

In an age in which there are voices many, and much confusion of sounds, and when the heart of man is corrupted by sensuality and selfishness, there may well be new emphasis on the exhortation of Jesus, "Enter into thy closet, and shut the door." Or let us say that there is still a stronger obligation honestly and earnestly to turn our eyes inward and compel every duty that asks obedience, and every truth that would have acceptance, to justify itself in the radiance that shines ever in the most holy of all temples, the sanctuary of the human soul.

The Inward Light

If we are true to ourselves, and then are led into error, the blame will have to be laid at the door of the Author of our being. If fidelity to God's handiwork leads away from God, whom may we trust? But there is no such danger. The poet of the Inward Light has finely expressed the truth to which this age, and all the ages, should give most earnest heed:

*“ What if the earth is hiding
Her old faiths long outworn?
What is it to the changeless truth
That yours shall fail in turn?*

*“ What if the o’returned altar
Lays bare the ancient lie?
What if the dreams and legends
Of the world’s childhood die?*

*“ Have ye not still my witness
Within yourselves alway,
My hand that on the keys of life
For bliss or bale I lay?*

*“ Still, in perpetual judgment
I hold assize within,
With sure reward of holiness
And dread rebuke of sin.*

The Inward Light

*"A light, a guide, a warning,
A presence ever near,
Through the deep silence of the flesh
I reach the inward ear."*
—WHITTIER, *"Vision of Echard."*

The Immanent God

CHAPTER SECOND

The Immanent God



THE pendulum of thought swings forward and backward with rhythmic regularity. Opinions which are conspicuous in one age are almost forgotten in the next. Most statements of belief also show the influence of locality and of race. Certain nations and races emphasize one phase of truth, and other nations and races emphasize other phases. This especially is true of the Being of God. Roman thinkers dwelt much upon the transcendence of the Deity, while Greek philosophers, and most Oriental teachers, have been impressed by His omnipresence and immanence. No one school has, or probably could have, the full and sufficient doctrine; that would require for its expression not only the practical qualities of the Roman mind combined with the mysticism of Greek and Ori-

The Inward Light

ental thinking, but also the wisdom and vision of all who have ever lived and loved, and learned by human experience. The diffusion of knowledge has given to every people something of the peculiarities of all nationalities and of all ages. Orientals are influenced by Occidentals, and Occidentals are beginning to feel the effect of the clear horizons of Greece and the splendid mountains of India. The prevailing emphasis in theology, since Calvin's time, has been upon the Roman method of thinking and on the Roman results of thought, but the last fifty years have witnessed a gradual return to the method and teaching of the Greek theologians of the early Christian centuries. Greece and the Orient have dwelt upon the reality of the "pervasive unity" and the "omnipresent energy." The Occident, on the other hand, has been more impressed by the conception of the Infinite Personality.

A doctrine of God large enough for mankind will not be found in the creed of any school or of any nation taken by itself, but

The Immanent God

it should rather be sought in a combination of what is essential and vital in the thinking of all nations and schools.

The pendulum having swung now in the direction of the Divine immanence, and that truth having a distinct relation to the reality of the Inward Light, I propose in this chapter to attempt such an elucidation and exposition of the doctrine as may be required by the subject to which this book is devoted.

The Inward Light is the indwelling presence of God. If that presence is in all men, then God must be in all men; if that light is everywhere, then God must be everywhere.

What does the phrase, "the Divine immanence," mean?

The difficulty of answering this inquiry is chiefly with the qualifying word "divine." Immanence signifies residing in, remaining in. Magnetism is immanent in certain metals; a man's spirit is immanent in his body. The thought of mere energy residing in the universe is a conception which may be easily, though not fully, grasped; but the concep-

The Inward Light

tion of the Personal Deity as thus immanent is too vast and complicated to be fully comprehended.

The Infinite personality does not exist apart from and beyond the universe, but actually inhabits it, as a man dwells in his house, as magnetism inheres in metals, as the spirit resides in the body, and as gravitation acts in all the spaces. We know that this must be so, because otherwise there would be some place or state outside the universe where God dwells, which would be the negation of the universe. Therefore, if God is, He must be in the universe, because it has no outside. The Deity, in some real and vital sense, is in all men, in all spaces, in all places, and He has been so in all times. The qualifications of these statements will appear as this study progresses.

Does this doctrine of the Divine immanence imply the indwelling of being and essence, or only that of potentiality? Is God actually in all men and in all things, or does He simply cause His energy to pervade them at will?

The Immanent God

In the nature of the case, an answer to this question must be conjectural. One teacher answers as follows: "His omnipresent energy is His immanence; but so great is that omnipresent energy that, instead of being the fully worked slave of the universe that He inhabits and maintains, God is its Master." (W. N. Clark, "An Outline of Christian Theology," p. 118.) Instead of saying, "His omnipresent energy is His immanence," I prefer to say, "His omnipresent 'personality' is His immanence," because energy may be an attribute of personality, but personality cannot be an attribute of mere energy. At this point illustration is easier than definition. "It is in human personality alone that we must look for light on our subject; the limited light, indeed, of a lantern carried in our own uncertain hand, but still the only light that we can possibly possess." (Illingworth, "Divine Immanence," p. 78.) The spirit of man pervades his body, and yet the spirit is not the body; and with our present knowledge, it is idle to inquire in

The Inward Light

what part of the physical organism the spirit resides. That man is a person, viz., a being who thinks, feels, chooses, and in whom these powers are united in a single finite self-consciousness, is all that is known. This personality is in a human body. We infer that thought, feeling, volition, in like manner, are united in an infinite self-consciousness — in the Being whom we call God, and that He pervades the universe as the human spirit pervades man's body. Spirit does not have dimensions, but, like thought and choice and love, it is independent of material barriers. A granite mountain is no obstacle in the way of thought; distance can put no chains on the power of choice; love can never be confined within prison walls. In the following way we think of God as immanent: There is no outside to the universe, and therefore He dwells in it. He is everywhere, because all space and all time belong to spirit or personality. As spirit, He is everywhere, not only potentially, but actually. He is in all material things, but not as an architect is in

The Immanent God

the building which he erects, because the building has existence apart from the builder, while the universe has no existence apart from God. It is continuously dependent upon Him. Is God in every flower and star, in every force and law? Whether He be in them in essence, I know not, but dynamically He must be. Without Him nothing would continue to exist.

Just here we are met by another question: This doctrine teaches that God is personality and that man is personality, and that God is immanent in human personality; but how can one personality dwell in another personality? Is the human personality distinct and individual? And is the Divine personality also distinct and individual? And in some way does one penetrate the other? Or is all personality divine, and man a being who is human only as to his body, but who is of the essence of God as to His spirit?

The confusion at this point arises from thinking of personality in physical terms. Two physical bodies cannot occupy one and the

The Inward Light

same place at the same time; but the power, if not the essence of one personality, may be in another without invading its individuality.

A man's thought is a part of himself. It is possible for me to receive into my mind a thought of Plato, and the very method of his thinking, so that I may have his temper, his character, his spirit, his intellectual processes. It may in like manner be said that God, by His thought, by His love, by His working, and by His ways of working, comes into our thought, love, and will.

But personality is itself divine; then, when it exists in man is it not only that part of the infinite personality which may be expressed in individual terms? In other words, is not the human person a divine emanation coming from God like a ray of light from the sun, and sometime to be absorbed in Him again?

In replying to these questions, I can only insist that consciousness certifies that we are persons and individuals, and that there is no

The Immanent God

reason to believe that personality in its essence is not the same in both God and man. By the aid of illustration and analogy we are trying to define that which cannot be fully defined, and to explain that which cannot be completely explained. At the most, such means help but a little to penetrate the mystery by which we are surrounded. We use them because they are the best that we have; they assure us that as, except in bulk, there can be no difference between an atom and the universe, so there can be no essential difference between the finite and the infinite personality. Thought, feeling, and volition are always in essence the same. Then, is the human personality identical with the divine, in the same sense that a bay or a tidal river is the ocean, in both of which the mass is undivided, while the individuality is preserved? It is difficult to see how any other conclusion is possible; nor need this be avoided so long as we cling to the reality of a personal God, and to man as an individual spiritual being. But how does this conclusion differ from pan-

The Inward Light

theism? Is it not saying, in effect, at least, that God is all?

There is a vital difference between saying that God is all, and that He is in all things. The universe may be pervaded by Deity. His power and wisdom may be in its every part, and yet neither the mountains nor the oceans be a part of Him. The pantheist says that all things are God; that there is no affection or intelligence except as the universe blossoms now into a man thinking, and again into a woman loving; that man is but one part of the house becoming intelligent; that the house and the man are identical. The theist says, on the contrary, that the house and the man are not identical; that the man is a spirit resident in and sustaining and using the house which is his body. Pantheism teaches that the universe is God; the Divine immanence implies that God dwells in, pervades, uses, and sustains the universe, but that by it He is never limited.

Robert Browning, the most philosophical of all poets, has expressed the truth of the im-

The Immanent God

manence of God in distinction from pantheism as follows:

*"This is the glory, that, in all conceived,
Or felt, or known, I recognize a mind—
Not mine, but like mine—for the double joy
Making all things for me, and me for Him."*

—HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU.

*"O Thou—as represented to me here
In such conception as my soul allows—
Under thy measureless, my atom-width!
Man's mind, what is it, but a convex glass
Wherein are gathered all the scattered points
Picked out of the immensity of sky,
To reunite there, be our heaven for earth,
Our known unknown, our God revealed to man."*

—THE RING AND THE BOOK.

Can the Divine immanence be proven? It cannot; neither can the Divine existence, but it is a condition of all rational thought about God. As has before been observed, He must be either in the universe or outside of it. If He is outside of it, then what is called the universe is falsely named; for the universe is

The Inward Light

the unity of all things that exist, and there can be no outside. But if there be no outside, then God must pervade all places and spaces because He is infinite, and nothing less than infinity could contain Him. The postulate of immanence is necessary to a rational conception of the Deity. Because it is a necessary idea it has the force of demonstration. Proof may be impossible, but the acceptance of the hypothesis is inevitable.

If the Deity is in the universe, He is subject to limitations; then how can He be infinite? I answer the spirit in man is only apparently the slave of the body. No barriers can hinder thought or obstruct love, and the power of choice is unfettered. My body may be in a dungeon, while my thought is sailing the oceans or making excursions among the stars; my body may be chained to some hateful creature, while my love pours all its riches at the feet of a kindred spirit a thousand miles away; my body may be surrounded by guards who make physical movement impossible, but neither guards nor armies can com-

The Immanent God

pel me to choose what I despise, or can for a single moment bend my unconquerable will. As to his power of choice, every man is free, although he may not be able to put his choice into action. The spirit is immanent in the body, and it also transcends the body; it uses the body, but never, except by its own choice, is used by the body. The Spirit who pervades the universe also, and in like manner, transcends the universe. He is superior to it and is its Master. Material limitations are no hindrances to His thought, feeling, and power of choice, which are the essence of all personality. As the human spirit is not necessarily limited by its body, so God is not limited by the Creation; it is merely the expression of His thought and will and love. It is constantly and forever what He chooses that it should be. Even evolution is but one of the processes by which God reveals Himself.

Wordsworth, in "Tintern Abbey," has finely expressed his faith in a Divine life hidden beneath the raiment of the natural world:

The Inward Light

*“ And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused ;
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
The round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains, and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create
And what perceived ; well pleased to recognize
In nature, and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.”*

Does not this conception of the Deity rest entirely on faith? It does ; but no more truly than do other forms of knowledge. Reality is discovered by faith. All intellectual conclusions are dependent on faith. “ We walk by faith, not by sight.” Faith is the eye of the soul—it is the soul seeing what the bodily

The Immanent God

eye could not discover. No man hath seen God at any time—that is, with the physical vision—but millions of pure souls have realized the truth of the Beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” All doctrines concerning the Unseen, in the last analysis, rest on faith. The Divine immanence is accepted by us not because it can be demonstrated, but because it best satisfies our intellectual necessities. In all thinking, with the help of our own mental faculties, we go a certain distance, but soon we reach a point where we face an abyss apparently with no bottom and no other side. If that abyss is crossed it must first be bridged by faith. But faith has no very heavy burden to carry in this instance. When I remember that I am a thinking, feeling, willing being—in short, that I am a personality—I cannot help inferring that the finite is a part of the infinite, that the limited implies the absolute, and that personality in man is the sure prophecy of the perfect personality, which is God.

The Inward Light

If God is immanent in the universe, then is He not evolved, as the physical creation is an evolution?

God is not the product of evolution, but He is its source. From Him are all things: by Him are all things: and for Him are all things. He is not the process of evolution, but He uses the process to give freedom to "the groaning creation," and to bring all men to the perfection for which they are intended.

What is the relation of the indwelling God to the development of history?

He is the power, not ourselves, working for righteousness. History is the movement of humanity toward a splendid goal. The most antagonistic forces work together for the good of man. The discords in the human orchestra at first seemed irreconcilable, but gradually the process of blending has gone on, until it is now evident that all men, all events, and all forces are converging toward one vast and universal harmony. In the end harmony is inevitable, and no man and no

The Immanent God

nation can hinder it longer than the hindrance is needed to make the harmony perfect. All things work together for good, not only for those who love God, but for the whole creation. Cruelty leads to kindness; and greed, in the end and in spite of itself, by its own reaction makes men generous. The more fierce and bloody the war, the clearer becomes the futility of war, and the more imperative the necessity of finding a way to beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks. If through the development of history "one unceasing purpose runs"; if even greed, cruelty, and hate are made to minister to progress; if all events are moving toward a goal of intellectual illumination and moral perfection, it is unreasonable to believe that the process is the result of chance, and without design. If palaces presume architects, and galleries full of Madonnas and Ascensions presume artists, does not a universe in which every part is slowly but surely moving toward beauty, toward harmony, toward truth, toward the victory of righteousness

The Inward Light

and the rule of love, necessitate the conviction that personality is as pervasive as the movement onward, and as sure to be victorious as it is universal?

These are a few of the questions which meet us as we climb toward those heights of human inquiry which open outward and upward toward the universe and toward God. In these sacred altitudes our pace must be slow, and our spirits should be humble. No tone of dogmatism ought to find its way into such an inquiry.

I cannot resist the belief that the renewal of emphasis upon the doctrine of the immanence of God is sure, in the future, to influence thought in many and most revolutionary ways, only one of which, however, it is necessary to consider.

The Apostle John, in his first epistle, has written, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." The physical scientist explores the spaces, and finds everywhere an "omnipresent energy." He calls it force, or gravitation, or electricity, it matters not

The Immanent God

what; for while it has many forms, all of them are manifestations of one energy. The spiritual philosopher seeks to explore the universe, and he goes but a little way before he finds that he is walking in the midst of light. It shines within and around him, and it shines within and around all human souls. And while this light has individual manifestations it is all one, as the light reflected from the lanterns of all the light-houses is the same as that which shines from each one individually. Energy is one, and omnipresent, and light is one and omnipresent; and the omnipresent energy is the immanent God, and the allpervasive light is also the immanent God. How the individual and the universal may coexist and cooperate we need not seek to explain, but that they do both coexist and cooperate, every man ought to appreciate, for every human mind is lighted from a Divine torch, every human heart is thrilled with divine emotion, and every human will is sovereign, like the Divine will.

The subject of this chapter finds frequent

The Inward Light

and sublime recognition in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. "Thou hast beset me behind and before." "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shalt Thy hand lead me." "The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." Elijah in the wilderness about Horeb heard a still small voice. "The Apostle John said, "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." Then God is everywhere that love is—that is, in every human heart.

Augustine, in his confessions, wrote: "I could not be, O my God, could not be at all, wert Thou not in me; rather, were not I in Thee, of whom all things are, by whom all things are, in whom all things are." The immanence of God was never more lucidly expressed than in these words of Paul, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Paul also said: "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God"—that is, beings in whom in a true sense God is reproduced, as every father is repro-

The Immanent God

duced in his son. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

Tennyson's poem, "The Higher Pantheism," is perhaps the classical expression of the modern conception of the immanence of God.

*"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills,
and the plains,
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who
reigns?"*

*"Is not the Vision He, though He be not that
which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not
live in dreams?"*

*"Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and
limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division
from Him?"*

*"Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason
why;
For is He not all but that which has power to
feel 'I am I'?"*

*"Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfil-
lest thy doom,
Making Him broken dreams, and a dimmed splen-
dor and gloom."*

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The Inward Light

*"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit
with Spirit can meet;*

*Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than
hands and feet.*

*"God is law, say the wise, O Soul, and let us re-
joice,*

*For if He thunder by law, the thunder is yet
His voice.*

*"Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the
fool;*

*For all we have power to see is a straight staff
bent in a pool;*

*"And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye
of man cannot see;*

*But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were
it not He?"*

The Deity present everywhere; the Deity in some vital sense dwelling in every human soul; the Deity the Perfect Light; this is the altitude to which we have been led by this study. The reality and the authority of the Inward Light now appear. The Inward Light is not the unaided powers of man which have been evolved by a slow and tedious process from

The Immanent God

no one knows what, but rather the clear shining of the Light which is God. Where shall we find God? In the splendor of the heavens, among the majesty of the mountains, in the vastnesses of the oceans? Yes, if we have eyes to see Him, for He is there; but a truth that is far more important for us to heed is, that He is near us, even in our hearts.

Have some persons more light than others? That is quite possible, for a few focus more light in themselves by their exceeding purity, but all have all that they need. Jesus the Perfect Man differed from other men in the perfection of His humanity—not in its nature. He had more light than smaller souls, but that which shone within Him was not different in kind from that which shone in Pilate and Herod. The distance between Him and them was as the distance between heaven and hell; but though He was divine, he was also human, even as they were, and the light within them was the same as the light within Him. He used the light, which they failed to

The Inward Light

use. The difference between them was an ethical, not an ontological difference. God is always the same whether He be in a palace or in a hovel. His presence carries brightness according to the condition of the radiating surface. The most obscure and apparently neglected souls not infrequently can teach us more of God than all the sages can.

The doctrine of the immanent God is pre-eminently the doctrine for an age of inquiry. It is not a modern phase of pantheism or of Neoplatonism. We are not now passing through a revival of Plotinus, or even of Spinoza; but we are having the universalism of the Hindoo and Greek conception of the Deity combined with the truer universalism which Science by her discoveries has made possible, united with the emphasis which Jesus always placed on personality and individuality. The result is that the sanctity of the human soul as the dwelling-place of the Deity has a hitherto unknown recognition. An increasing number of persons of all classes are appreciating that within every

The Immanent God

man there is light and leading, standard and authority, moral power and spiritual certainty; and that no sanctuary on Eastern mountain, and no cathedral in Western city, are so sacred as the soul of man in which God's voice speaks, and where, in God's light, the truth is revealed.

Spirit and Life

CHAPTER THIRD

Spirit and Life



HIS theme is distinguished both by its vastness and by its mystery. In its presence one may well remember that the place on which he stands is holy ground. Yet the subject was often on the lips of Jesus, and has such a vital relation to the Christian Revelation, and to individual and spiritual growth, that it ought to be carefully and reverently studied.

What do these texts mean? "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii, 38, 39).

The Inward Light

Here are two distinct utterances: The former was spoken by Jesus, the latter is an interpretation of His words by the writer of the fourth gospel. With some, the authority of the interpretation may depend on their theory concerning the authorship of that gospel. If the writer was the beloved disciple the interpretation will command assent at once; if the author was some unknown spiritual genius, writing a hundred years later, recognition of the right of authoritative interpretation may be more grudgingly given. We will presume for the time that this gospel was written by John, in spite of whatever evidence may be adduced to the contrary, for this interpretation of the work of the Spirit harmonizes with all that we know of what Jesus taught His disciples concerning this subject. The Master was speaking to seekers after truth rather than to the select circle of His followers. In effect He says, "If you are really athirst for God, and for reality, come to me, trust me, believe on me, and you shall be so full of the true life that it will flow out

Spirit and Life

of you as waters from an overflowing fountain. In other words, if you really prefer truth and right, come into close personal relation with me, and you will receive in abundance what you desire." This exhortation, the writer of this gospel says, refers to the Spirit which was to be received but which was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. Concerning this passage Meyer says: "The water which he drinks becomes in his body a spring from which streams of living water flow; *i.e.*, the Divine grace and truth which the believer has received out of Christ's fulness into his inner life does not remain shut up within, but will communicate itself in abundant measure as the life-giving stream to others, and thus the new Divine life flows from one individual on to others." Again, Meyer refers to the statement in the thirty-ninth verse as relating "to those streams of new life which flowed forth from the lips of believers, and which were originated and drawn forth by the Holy Ghost." Reduced to the simplest terms, this

The Inward Light

means that if those who are athirst for truth and right will accept Jesus and follow Him, they will be enabled to live the life of the Spirit, to realize the power of the Spirit, and to help others to do the same.

But what about the declaration that the Spirit was not yet given? That does not indicate that the Holy Spirit until then had been absent from the universe, or that His energy had never before been felt, as some ignorantly declare. To affirm that is to deny the Divine omnipresence, and to reduce the Spirit to human proportions. The real meaning is, that the flowing forth of the new life and power from Christ's disciples, and through the Church, was not to take place until He had gone away; then the Spirit was to enter on His Christian manifestation. "Till then the believers were dependent on the personal manifestation of Jesus" (Meyer), but after His departure they would appreciate and respond to the power of His spiritual presence. The Spirit has always been efficient in the creation, in the lives of men, in the devel-

Spirit and Life

opment of history; but after the revelation in the Christ a new vision of God and of His kingdom was possible. While Jesus was with the disciples it was inevitable that they should regard Him as an end; it was, therefore, as He said, expedient for them, and necessary for His work, that He should go away, in order that the glory of His person and the magnitude of His mission might be understood. When that should be appreciated a grander era in human history would dawn, and the life that was in Christ would begin to flow from His disciples, and later from those who should enter through them into His fellowship; and thus like a river of light would that life extend and expand, until the kingdoms of the earth should become a part of the kingdom of God.

The Spirit has never been nearer to one place than to another, and never more efficient in one time than in another. God ought not to be represented as coming or going, except as a condescension to human limitations. He is everywhere and with all. But after the Ascen-

The Inward Light

sion a clearer revelation of God was possible, because henceforward He could be interpreted in the terms of Jesus Christ. That event marked the beginning of a larger and truer appreciation of God's fatherhood and purpose to save; consequently it opened a new epoch in the life of humanity. From that moment, as never before, Spirit became life. The forces which are lifting individuals, institutions, and the whole human family, to Christian levels are all from Him. Spirit, as the fountain from which this higher energy emerges, is spelled with a capital S; and spirit as the life in humanity which is bearing fruit in love and service, faith and holy conduct, is spelled with a small s; but the word in both instances is composed of the same letters, and the reality behind the letters is the same whether it be cause in God or life in man.

Spirit is life in the history of mankind, and Spirit is light because it is life. "The Life was the light of men." Spirit is unhindered by physical limitations. Spirit is everywhere that the Christian revelation has gone and every-

Spirit and Life

where that personality is found. Within all men, therefore, is all the light which they need for illumination and guidance. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and need not that any man should teach you." This was spoken especially of the disciples of Christ, but potentially and in a limited sense it is true of all men.

The Quakers are quite right; there is an Inward Light which is in all men, as a part of God's fatherly gift to them of humanity. "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come" (John xvi, 13). What does this mean? That some external supernatural light, in some strangely mystical way, falls upon us and illuminates our path? Does it not mean, rather, that within all men there is light—obscured, perhaps, yet surely there—which is sufficient for all duties; that the candle in every soul is lighted from God, who is the Sun; and that it is every man's supreme duty and privilege to use the light which

The Inward Light

shines within, and which will never fail those who are pure in mind and loyal in heart? Of course, that leads directly to the conclusion that the authority both as to belief and as to conduct is to be found within, and not without. This, to some, may sound revolutionary, but it is only going back to Elijah's time, and recognizing that God is in the still small voices rather than in the fire and in the earthquake. Holy Scripture, and experience, clearly teach that within the soul athirst for God is One who will answer all its questions and satisfy all its desires.

More emphasis ought to be placed on the reality of the Inward Light. What men most need is not new emphasis on what is written without, but clearer appreciation of what is written within. Let me honestly, and with fearlessness, study the truth as God has implanted it in my own soul. The chief spiritual difficulty of our time is the fact that so few are willing to know themselves. "Know thyself," for thus, and thus only, may you hope to know God. It may be replied, "Then all

Spirit and Life

authoritative standards go; then the guess of one man is as good as that of another," etc. But at this very point is the mistake. I am not speaking of the guesses of any man, but, instead, insisting that the truth which we need to know is written within as surely, if not as clearly, as without; that it was within before it was without; that it was expedient for Jesus to go away in order that the eyes of His disciples might no longer be monopolized by His person, but be turned inward; that we have no more sacred obligation than to study the truth which stands revealed in the Inward Light, and that no man who is perfectly loyal to himself can at the same time be false to God. This is not introspection, which is merely thinking of ourselves to find what of self is written there; it is rather the study of our own soul-processes, to find what God has written and is still writing there. Those who do that will not be disappointed. "What shall we believe about God?" Enter into thy closet; shut the door; honestly ask, What does the still voice

The Inward Light

declare God must be? and then go out into the world and dare to trust the answer. What ought I to do in this hour of moral perplexity? If I take a certain course some one may be hurt; if I do not take it some one else may be displeased. What shall I do? Ask the Church? It is composed of men as limited as I know myself to be. Open the Bible? It deals with principles, but here is a concrete and almost desperate situation. What course remains? I will turn my eyes inward; I will honestly face what I find written there. I shall never fail to find in my inmost soul that which I know to be right, even though to confess it may be a difficult task. Whittier was a true prophet when he wrote:

*" So to the calmly gathered thought
The innermost of truth is taught,
The mystery dimly understood,
That love of God is love of Good,
And, chiefly its divinest trace
In Him of Nazareth's holy face:
That to be saved is only this—
Salvation from our selfishness;*

Spirit and Life

*From more than elemental fire,
The soul's unsanctified desire;
From sin itself, and not the pain
That warns us of its chafing chain;
That worship's deeper meaning lies
In mercy, and not sacrifice;
Not proud humilities of sense,
And posturing of penitence,
But love's unforced obedience;
That Book and Church and Day are given
For man, not God—for earth, not heaven—
The blessed means to holiest ends,
Not masters, but benignant friends;
That the dear Christ dwells not afar,
The king of some remoter star,
Listening, at times, with flattered ear
To homage wrung from selfish fear;
But here, amid the poor and blind,
The bound and suffering of our kind,
In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life, He lives to-day."*

WHITTIER, "The Meeting."

The spirit of man under the leadership of the Spirit of God, and thus the God within all, is the inspirer and motive of duty. The Spirit is both light and power. It is one

The Inward Light

thing to discover a duty, and quite another to be impelled to its performance. The disciples knew nearly, if not quite, as much before the Ascension as afterward; but the departure of Jesus was needed in order that they might appreciate what He had taught them, and be impelled to put their knowledge into character. Absence was necessary in order that light might become power.

Pentecost was not so much a manifestation of something coming from without, as the outflowing of a Spirit dwelling within. This internal force became operative when the disciples learned that it was best for Jesus to leave them, in order that the sovereignty of the Spirit might be recognized. Where is the supreme moral dynamic? Does it reside in duty as duty? There is nothing attractive in sacrifice, in the cost of patriotism, in refusal to yield to the desires and impulses of the senses. Duty often requires crucifixion of the desires. Soldiers do not go into battle for the pleasure of it; no missionary chooses isolation and social hunger for the happiness

Spirit and Life

which they give. The power that attracts toward holy conduct does not inhere in the thing to be done, for that may be extremely distasteful. Righteousness is seldom the result of reverence for external authority. Commands are efficient only as there is force behind them sufficient to impel obedience. Neither heroic enterprise, nor even the humblest act of self-denial, is ever virtuously performed because of compulsion from without. If undertaken from such a motive the act ceases to be virtuous. But men are impelled toward goodness; they choose to deny their most imperious desires; they go on long journeys, undertake perilous tasks, elect courses which mean the defeat of long-cherished plans—for what reason? Because they are consecrated to the realization of the superlative human ideal—the ideal actual in Jesus Christ. Toward that mark they press with unfaltering faith and with deathless devotion, because they are impelled by the spirit (spelled with a small s) which has been inspired by the Spirit (spelled with a capital

The Inward Light

S). The spirit of man thus becomes not only light, but power also; and wherever it is not obstructed, pure thoughts, heroic action, and noble service are as natural and as sure as fruit in the autumn. A man has only to yield himself to the transcendent yet immanent Spirit, and virtue and goodness will flow from him as water from a fountain.

This fact has had many conspicuous illustrations, but often the truest evidence of the Spirit's efficiency is found in the fidelity of obscure people to humble duties. A woman, in patience enduring a beast of a man, sometimes shows more heroism than has ever been seen upon a battle-field. A young man amazed his friends by withdrawing from a lucrative business because his employer had asked him to do what would be wrong. That required moral courage of the finest quality. Such acts are the natural fruits of the Spirit. Spirit is life, and life is always power. A growing seed will split a rock, and somehow, and sometime, the Spirit which is in man, which I do not try to define, but whose mani-

Spirit and Life

festations are as evident as flying clouds, or waving forests, or fruitful harvests, will break through the inherited tendencies toward selfishness and sin, and, casting aside evil environments, will lift individuals and the race far toward the fulness of Christ.

Spirit, which is life, is the cause of progress; it is the efficient agent in evolution. What is evolution? It is the gradual development, according to inherent laws, of a resident force. What is that force? I choose to call it spirit—and not spirit spelled with a small *s* alone, but spirit spelled with a small *s* touched with Spirit spelled with a capital *S*. Evolution may be defined as the process by which the Spirit immanent in the universe responds to the Spirit who transcends the universe; yet both are one. Since the beginning of the Christian era a steady movement upward has been evident among all nations. The ideals of men have risen, their mutual relations have become more amicable, their laws and institutions more humane, their moral standards purer. The whole surface of

The Inward Light

society, which in the time of the Cæsars was a moral desolation, with here and there oases, has now come to resemble a harvest-field, with here and there rocks and morasses. The contrast between the world in our day and in that day is almost startling. Progress has been steady, if not swift. Before, the inquiry was as to how to promote personal morality; now we are looking for a power strong enough to insure the moral progress of the common humanity. That power is the Spirit, of which Jesus spoke in the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John. The Spirit in man means the Spirit in society, in politics, in all human relations. Sooner or later He will uplift the universal life. As water falls only to rise again, so the Spirit in man tends ever to return to its source, at the same time raising the entire social organism. Psychologists teach that God is immanent in man's subconsciousness. What is progress, but the world's subconsciousness slowly coming to realize its divine origin and goal? What is the force resident in society which always impels it

Spirit and Life

upward? Since Christ's advent we have seen that there have been clearer visions of truth, saner ideals of duty, more general human amelioration; and now the movement upward is swifter than ever before. This world-wide upward tendency is the result in humanity of the operation of the Spirit which was in Jesus.

The Spirit of truth, leading men into all truth, with the consequent moral, social, and political transformations, constitutes human progress. And who shall limit the sphere of the Spirit's activity? It studies the starry heavens, and finds there evidences of its own origin; it examines the human personality, and comes to the conclusion that that personality must survive bodily death; it explores the spaces, and finds that they may be made vocal with the messages of man; it recognizes truth in its myriads of forms of expression, and preserves them in literature, art, and music; and most of all it seeks to improve the human condition. With the release of the body from all sense-bondage,

The Inward Light

and with its perfection and health, the Spirit itself will have a finer and truer vehicle for its expression. As I study the human landscape, it seems to me that life is everywhere rushing forward toward nobler manifestation; that it is like a garden where all the plants, shrubs, and trees are hurrying toward the blossoming-time. The secret is not in death—if there is any death; it is in life—in spirit, even the spirit in man, which is first the Spirit of God, and not less the Spirit of God because also the spirit in man.

The spiritualization of all men, and of all institutions, is the goal of history.

What is meant by the spiritualization of all men and institutions? Are not all men spirits? Yes, but all do not live in the realization of their origin and destiny. The spiritual being has been evolved, but he often turns back to the fleshly condition from which he has risen, and, losing himself amid the rudiments of this world, fails to know himself to be a spirit. Individuals are spiritualized when they realize that they have come from God,

Spirit and Life

and live according to their higher rather than their lower natures. And this is the lesson of lessons, actually to appreciate that we are spirits, and that, as naturally as flowers turn toward the sun, so when we are our true selves, we turn toward God, the Father of spirits, and are dissatisfied with everything at enmity with Him. "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee." ("Confessions," book i, Augustine.) A man is spiritualized when he realizes himself to be a spirit, and in motive and action is governed by his higher nature. The line between the sense-life and the spirit-life is clear. The sense-life is the sensual life; it has to do with fleshly desires and with animal tendencies; it is that which allies man to animals. The spirit moves in a realm of freedom; it is rightfully independent of fleshly limitations and inclinations; it has to do with the moral faculty, the higher reason, the will, and the emotions. Slowly through weary ages our race has been moving upward, away from the animal

The Inward Light

toward the liberty of the children of God. When men shall live in the consciousness that they are partakers of God's very being, and, therefore, spirits since He is Spirit; and when they shall dwell in harmonious relations with one another, as Godlike spirits surely must, then the race will be spiritualized, and the triumph of the Kingdom of God will be at hand.

Many are still competing and combating with one another; they are like hungry bears fighting for meat; they think of themselves, and not of others. They carry their contentions not only into politics and society, but often even into the Church of God. Brothers compass sea and land to kill one another like angry lions and tigers; nevertheless, such conditions are gradually changing; justice is taking the place of injustice, generosity of greed; selfishness is giving way to sacrifice; armies are drilling and battle-ships are being built, but wars are now the last resort, and soon must cease to be. The world and its institutions are being spiritualized. The slow

Spirit and Life

but certain process will go on until cruelty and vice shall disappear, until the war-drum shall throb no longer, until the reign of the quadruped shall be broken, until "the crowning race" shall walk this earth of ours. Then we shall know that the spiritualization of man and the perfection of institutions are the Kingdom of God and the fulness of Christ.

This is what the presence of the Spirit in history clearly prophesies. From the earliest ages until now humanity has been rising; its ideals have become clarified; the evolution of the human spirit has been more and more evidently toward the Infinite Spirit. This fact is predicted in Holy Scripture in those texts which tell us that the words of Christ are Spirit and life, and that from all who have come into touch with Him the living waters will flow, in benefit and benediction, until individuals and institutions, and mankind as a whole, shall realize, even on this earth, the life of the Spirit as it was in Christ.

The Spirit of God identifying Himself with the spirit in man is "The Inward Light"—

The Inward Light

the Candle of the Lord—the Revealer of truth and duty.

He is the inspiration toward holy conduct, the power which causes truth to become life.

He is the cause of progress in individuals and among human institutions.

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The Inward Sinai

CHAPTER FOURTH

The Inward Sinai



MOST impressive picture at the Royal Academy in London, in the season of 1904, was one representing Moses on Mount Sinai wrapped in the white light of the desert. He was literally clothed with light as with a garment. The splendor encompassed him, shone through him, was radiated from him. The effect of the painting was strange and almost preternatural; but thus does the light pervade and possess men on the heights and in those latitudes.

Of the light without, and which shines from above, all are conscious, but to the still more wonderful radiance which glows within many seem to have blinded their eyes. Yet there was a deep reality in the vision of John Woolman, of which he writes as follows in his Journal: "It was yet dark, and no appearance of day

The Inward Light

or moonshine, and as I opened mine eyes I saw a light in my chamber, at the apparent distance of five feet, about nine inches in diameter, of a clear, easy brightness, and near its centre the most radiant. As I lay still, looking upon it without any surprise, words were spoken to my inward ear which filled my whole inward man. They were not the effect of thought, nor any conclusion in relation to the appearance, but as the language of the Holy One spoken in my mind. The words were *certain evidence of Divine truth*. They were again repeated exactly in the same manner, and then the light disappeared." ("John Woolman's Journal," p. 108.) Whatever Woolman may have said about this vision, few readers of this story would doubt that the whole experience was internal, and intended to affirm the authority of the inward voice.

What did Immanuel Kant mean when he said that the two things which filled him with the deepest awe were the starry heavens above and the moral law within? Was it not that to him

The Inward Sinai

the moral law, written in the very constitution of his being, was as evident as the stars in the heavens?

This picture of Moses in the Royal Academy, the experience of John Woolman, reformer and mystic, and this well-known saying of the greatest of modern philosophers, bring us face to face with the Sinai of the desert and with the Sinai of the soul. With the former, at least, most Hebrews and Christians are familiar; but with the latter and nearer Sinai they seem not so well acquainted. The moral law is written in every man as clearly as the commandments were graven by Moses; the inner Sinai is quite as evident and authoritative as the Sinai without, and the law in the soul not only antedates the Mosaic law, but is recognized as obligatory in regions where that was never heard. The Mosaic law is but a transcript of the eternal moral order. The obligations to worship, to be loyal to parents, to be truthful and pure, are not made duties by being written in the commandments, but they were engraven among them because they

The Inward Light

have been obligatory as long as man has existed.

The purpose of the Creation is one. The law without always corresponds to the law within. Revelation is not an afterthought, but an unveiling of truth which had always been clear to those who have had eyes to see.

In what sense is the moral law written within? But why even ask this question? Because many, who do not accept the authority of Moses as an ethical teacher, will recognize the value of the commandments if they are confirmed by the sure voices of conscience and of reason. Have ethical principles which are inculcated in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures any claim on obedience other than the fact that they are written in our sacred books? They may be found in a universal and far older record, that is, in the very constitution of man. Will that statement stand the scrutiny of impartial and thorough investigation? Let us inquire.

Conscience speaks concerning every act and every choice, and has so spoken always and

The Inward Sinai

everywhere. It is not a law; it is a voice approving or condemning, according to the nature of the action proposed or performed. Whenever any choice is to be made, the obligation to make the choice which shall harmonize with truth and right is felt to be inevitable and imperative. The task of learning what the right is is left to the intelligence, and the result will vary according to the degree of the intelligence, but the duty to obey the right and to follow the truth is invariable. Conscience gives no peace until men walk in the way of righteousness; for every man that way at any given time is the way which, in the use of all the light that he can get, he believes to be the right one. "Thou shalt do the right," and "Thou shalt not do the wrong," or the consciousness of ought and ought not, are far older than the thunders of Sinai; and they would have been just as emphatic if Moses had never lived, and if there had been no Sinai. Those who listen hear that voice, and from it no one can utterly escape. Why should we do right?

The Inward Light

Why should we refuse to do wrong? Because in no other way can we be loyal to ourselves, or be at peace. The duty of obeying the Deity when He speaks within is quite as imperative as when He speaks from without. Conscience is eternal and universal. Every "Thou shalt" in the Bible is but an echo of an older "Thou shalt" in the human soul. Conscience is not a primary source of knowledge; it is rather the soul, insisting that what the intellect discerns to be the right path shall be followed. A few illustrations of how the moral law is written within will help toward a clearer understanding of the subject.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

A recent writer suggests that this commandment shows mere rivalry among deities. "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," etc., indicates, he continues, that Jehovah was jealous of the deities of other nations. Possibly, but it is somewhat surprising that that interpretation was never thought of before. Is not the following nearer the truth? The first commandment is an assertion of the unity

The Inward Sinai

of God, and of the fact that recognition of the claims of rival deities would end in moral chaos? This is the essence of the first commandment: One supreme power on whom all are dependent, and one alone, should be worshipped. "But men have believed in many gods." In one sense, yes, and in another, no. They have believed in their god, and that their god was mightier than all others. Does not this imply that all men have recognized an Unseen Power, that He was greater than others, and that it was their duty to be loyal to Him? The Greeks worshipped many gods, but only one of them was king. With them Fate was supreme, for even Zeus at the last had to bow to it.

That which distinguished the Hebrew conception of the Almighty, separating it from those in the ethnic religions, was the belief that He was perfectly good, and that the moral order was the expression of His essential Being. The recognition of the duty of a given people to be loyal to such an idea of the Deity as has been possessed by that people

The Inward Light

is universal, and as old as history. The Hebrew Jehovah was an ethical Being, more worthy of reverence than others because better; while the Greek gods and goddesses were sublimated men and women, with fiery passions and insatiable desires.

“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.” This is the statement of a natural law with which students of heredity are even more familiar than are the students of the Bible, and of which doctors of medicine are more capable expounders than are doctors of divinity. That law was written in a terrible alphabet in the physical nature of man, before Israel as a people with a mission had been gathered out of the confused mass of humanity. Moses discovered its presence and action, and gave to it immortal expression. Any Buddhist priest might have read the same word of God if he had had the vision. The commandment is

The Inward Sinai

a sententious mode of saying that wrongdoing results in physical degeneration, and that that degeneracy in the form of disease is transmitted to three or four generations; and that then Nature asserts herself and reverts to her original type. Insanity will last for a few generations, and then the physical nature will get free from this special perversion. On the other hand, moral health contains in itself no seeds of decay. If left to itself it will never degenerate. Tendencies toward special forms of evil seldom reach beyond the fifth generation, while the influence of holy conduct endures forever. The commandment is scientific. Everyone may know that those who live according to nature's laws have blessings multiplied; while those who disobey will suffer in their own persons, and will pass their misery and weakness to their children, even to the third and fourth generation.

Science, which is but man reading the book of nature, long ago discovered all this; and anyone who is willing to see things as they

The Inward Light

are may verify the statement by looking within and following his own choices to their inevitable results.

The fourth commandment furnishes another illustration, which may be easily verified. Is that the utterance of a provincial religionist, who if he had known more would have written more wisely? It is rather an eternal and universal law put into human language by one who saw what his countrymen did not see, because their burdens were so heavy and their live so dreary that they had no desire exhaustively to study anything, not even their own hearts. The setting apart of one day in seven for rest and worship was due, primarily, to the fact that the human machine will run six days with ease and regularity, if it can rest on the seventh day, but that it will creak and break if it is pushed on through every day alike. The duty of rest is quite as imperative as the necessity of work. The individual or the nation that disregards this law pays the penalty ; and, speaking with perfect reverence, we may say that, however

The Inward Sinai

much it may gain in emphasis, the duty to observe the Sabbath gains nothing in obligation because of the indorsement by Moses. The world needed then, as it needs now, to be reminded of the inevitable results of neglect of this evident natural law; therefore Moses wrote.

The filial relation and the command to obey parents is an equally impressive illustration. The filial obligation has long been recognized, in many forms and in varying degrees, among people by whom the laws of Moses were not even known. The Chinese and Japanese place loyalty to parents above loyalty to wife and children. The filial relation did not begin to exist when the Decalogue was written; it is, and always has been, in the nature of things. The Hebrew ethics are in no true sense original; they are as old as the Creation. They were put into human language for the sole purpose of enforcing eternal truths. No ethical principle derives its authority from the teacher who first gave it currency. The teacher is an authority only

The Inward Light

so far as he has the vision to discern essential truths. Human laws may be arbitrary, but every Divine law rests upon an evident reason. An autocrat may say, "My will is reason enough"; but our heavenly Father adapts His commands to the condition of His children, and their need is the justification of His law.

The ethical teachings of Jesus, also, like those of the elder law-givers, are transcripts of what long before were written in the body and soul of man. He taught that pure thoughts are a condition of virtuous conduct and holy character. As a man thinks, sooner or later he will act. The connection between the mental state and outward conduct was discerned rather than constituted by Jesus. He spoke truths of which anyone else, who had studied to an equal depth what was written in his own soul, might have spoken.

Jesus commanded men to love their enemies—why? Because it is the only way in which enmity can be changed into friendliness, and peace be brought out of discord. Why do

The Inward Sinai

not all see that for themselves? Fight an enemy, and you make him a thousand-fold more your enemy; the only way to conquer his hostility is to love him. A man may be crushed by force, but his hostility can be overcome only by gracious ministries and loving service.

Jesus said again, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is a universal ethical law. Spiritual vision is conditioned on moral purity. When was that first discovered? When was it not true?

The final word in human ethics is the command of Jesus, "Ye shall love one another, as I have loved you." Nothing more can be asked of any man than that love should not falter even in the face of death. Was that a new law, or an old law written large in the blood of the Cross? It is no detraction from the unique grandeur of the character of Jesus to say that it is the nature of love to give itself for its own, and that the sacrifice of the Cross was a necessity to Jesus. According to its perfection, love must sacrifice. The

The Inward Light

unique quality of the command of Jesus was not in any new interpretation of the nature of love, or in the fact that love must reach even unto death; rather was it in its inclusive quality. His love included all men; racial antipathies and social gradations had no place in His thoughts. He regarded all men as actually brothers, whether they knew it or not. His cross illustrates the inevitable reach of love when given a full opportunity of expression. Love, as pure affection, is the same whether it be in a child or in an adult, in a man or in God. Love, if need arise, must die for its object; there is no way of escape except by ceasing to love. Love is old as the Creation, as old as God. The highest expression of ethical law that was ever spoken, or written, is thus seen to be but a leaf out of the history of the soul.

In this study I am dealing only with essential morality. Minor questions may arise as to usages or customs which are matters of opinion merely, and of no vital relation to the moral life. Shall I be baptized by immersion,

The Inward Sinai

or by sprinkling? Shall I use a liturgy, or worship in the spirit alone, as the Quakers do? Shall I be a member of this society, or that? Such inquiries sometimes, to narrow or diseased minds, seem to have importance. It is a sad fact that, in spite of the warning of Jesus against Phariseism, so many should still be paying tithes of rite, creed, symbol, and neglecting love, justice, and loyalty to conscience, which are essential to righteousness.

The Inward Sinai is a reality; what follows? All men are responsible for their conduct, because they carry around with them the ethical laws which they need. It would be monstrous to think that men could be punished for the violation of laws the existence of which it was impossible for them to know. I must confess that there is one side of this subject on which I have little light. Why do so many people suffer for the sins of others? Who shall explain this mystery? Every man possesses sufficient knowledge of right and of wrong to enable him to choose the right and

The Inward Light

to reject the wrong. All men have the light which they need; therefore they are without excuse when they do wrong. Yet some persons begin to move downward before they become conscious that they are free agents: what of them? Some are born with crippled wills: what of them? They are not outside the love of God, and no injustice can be done to them. "To one fixed stake my spirit clings: I know that God is good." But most men might know the truth and do the right, if they would: and their condemnation is not in the fact that they reject a standard which this or that self-constituted authority has set up, but because they are untrue to the revelations of the light which shines within.

The unity of human life has many beautiful illustrations. Vital ideals are not different in any land. There is not one ethical code for India, another for Japan, and another for Anglo-Saxondom. There is diversity of knowledge, there are degrees of attainment; but when men the world around report what they see in the Inner Light, they

The Inward Sinai

alike confess that they should bow before the highest authority of which they know; that they ought to cherish their parents and their children; that purity is the condition of spiritual vision; that to love one another is better than sacrifices and liturgies; and that pure love cannot stop short of willingness to die for its object.

Many errors cause antagonisms in society; selfish interests are always divisive; nations often represent little but organized greed; religions in the past have sometimes separated people even more than they have united them. As we study the sad and awful controversies which have darkened human history, we question if better times will ever come. But while knowledge is of different degrees, conscience speaks clearly to all, and there is little if any difference, even among people widely separated, concerning the fundamentals of the ethical life. The ultimate moral ideals are nearly the same in every land, and there is little difference between the Orient and the Occident as to what is essential to

The Inward Light

goodness. This is one of the most encouraging of prophecies. It presages a time when all the nations will be united in their deepest interests. There will be not only cooperation among the states, but something vastly more fundamental and more vital, viz., unity at the very source of history, at the fountain from which proceed all plans, policies, purposes, and achievements. The Inward Sinai is a sublime prediction of the unity of life and of the goal of the Creation.

This study has discovered not only an Inward Sinai, but also an Inward Judgment, which surely points toward an outer and a universal judgment. The swift internal condemnation which follows every wrong choice is a fact in the moral history of the race which cannot be evaded. Consciousness at this point is singularly emphatic. The problem with the average man is, "How may I escape from that retribution whose justice I cannot deny?" Remorse is the reaction in the soul of the judgment which conscience has pronounced.

Moral laws carry with them their own judg-

The Inward Sinai

ment-day, and no emergencies ever arise which cloud its solemn splendor. The reaction of wrong-doing, or even of wrong-thinking, is swift and inevitable. If one spends an hour with salacious imaginations; if he appropriates even a dollar which does not belong to him; if he yields to his temper and violently denounces one whom he has misunderstood, the condemnation will be instantaneous. Many try to hide from the penalty which has been passed on them by their own moral nature. They are vainly seeking to flee from an inward Nemesis; no one but themselves knows of the wrong which they have done; no ear but their own has heard the verdict pronounced on them; their secret would not be more secure at the bottom of the sea; and yet they can elude this avenging Deity no more than they can escape from their own shadows.

The Sinai of the desert, and the Judgment-day, were facts in the history of the soul long before there was any hint of them elsewhere. Their subjective reality was a silent

The Inward Light

but sure prophecy that sometime they would have objective existence also.

What is the origin of these experiences? What is the genesis of this internal moral law and this judgment-seat?

Can they be accounted for by evolution? And if they can be so explained, do they not lose their note of inevitability and moral imperative? Evolution does not necessarily imply self-origination. What grows in any soil must first have been planted therein. Even the universal moral order is the outgrowth of Divine seed. Conscience loses nothing of its authority because it may be a product of evolution. Evolution is simply the path by which any being, or any institution, or the universe itself, reaches the maturity of its development. If it be the will of the Deity to realize Himself in humanity by means of a process, He does not thereby cease to be Deity, nor does He lose anything of His authority. The moral law is written in the soul of man as clearly as any article is written in the code of Justinian, or in the works of

The Inward Sinai

Confucius, or in the sacred books of the Hebrews; and its authority is not dependent on the book in which it is written; it is guaranteed by its evident truthfulness as it appears in the Inward Light. The ultimate authority for all ethical ideals is in the Being from whom they have come; the nearer authority is in the truth to which they give expression; and the vehicle of their revelation is of value only so far as it transmits the truth without loss of power.

The utterance of the oracle, "Know thyself," derives new significance from this study. Self-knowledge is the first duty of man, because nowhere as within his own soul can he be so sure of God or of the Divine Will.

How may men learn to read the laws which are written in this Inward Sinai? This is a simple question, yet an answer is not easy. For long ages inquirers have been taught to look without, and it seems almost sacrilegious to intimate that any may find Divine revelations within themselves. Moreover, with many there is a lurking feeling that to do

The Inward Light

so is to substitute for a real ethical law only a subjective imagination; that it is to turn from revelation to naturalism. Nothing could be further from the facts. Truth is truth and right is right wherever they are found, and "God manifests Himself in many ways." If one would know his duty, he must dare to turn his eyes inward and fearlessly read what is written there; he must ask himself what, apart from all his desires, he actually finds to be right. If the Hindoo mother had listened to her heart, she would never have thrown her child into the Ganges; if Christians would take counsel of their own love, they would not fear lest God should sometime cast off those whose chief faults are due to their heredity or to their environment; and if he who hesitates as to duty would heed the law within, he would not be allowed to go far away from wisdom and virtue. All that we might like to know may not be written within; but all that we need to know is there clearly expressed. The law in the soul is as evident and imperative as the law without,

The Inward Sinai

and the Sinai of the desert is the manifestation in the terms of time and space of the everlasting moral order.

The Sanctity of Duty

CHAPTER FIFTH

The Sanctity of Duty



WHAT is duty? It is something which is due either to one's self or to another. It carries with it the idea of obligation. My duty is what I ought to do because of what I am, because of what I have promised, or because of some claim which another has upon me. It implies a debt which must be paid. It is an inward revelation. The word of no man, or body of men, is authoritative if it is not indorsed by the reason and moral sense. The reason may be ignorant and the moral sense without illumination, but whatever the degree of their intelligence, the external command must have their indorsement before it becomes imperative. The intellect and the conscience, in themselves, are not the Inward Light, but they are the organs by which that Light reveals duty as such, and

The Inward Light

without which its authority would not be recognized. The fountain of obligation is God revealed in the soul of man.

The Ten Commandments are an enumeration of man's chief duties. Jesus said that He came not to do away with any part of the law, but to give to it a larger interpretation. And here we face a fact which is often overlooked or misrepresented. Jesus, instead of putting less emphasis on duty or obligation than did Moses, gave to it stronger emphasis. The moral law was not lowered by Him; it was lifted to a higher range. The sanctity of duty could hardly have had stronger expression than in the Sermon on the Mount. He based that sanctity on the clearly discernible relation between man and God.

Is the consciousness of moral obligation weaker than formerly? It may not be wise to institute comparisons, but, whether weaker or stronger, one fact is evident: Duty makes far too slight an impression upon the average man. He expects that things will come out all right, whatever he does; or he is so en-

The Sanctity of Duty

grossed with the struggle for existence, and the rivalry of competition, that only one class of obligations receive much, if indeed any, attention; or the desire for pleasure has so taken possession of him that the solemn voice of responsibility is hushed. Ought not that long-forgotten word "duty" to be exhumed from the dust-heap of memory, or rescued from the tyranny of custom, and more widely made a controlling motive in conduct? The people of our time are distinguished by a willingness to drift, to leave circumstances to deliver them from critical conditions which ought rather to be recognized and faced. Some voice strong enough to speak once more "The Everlasting Yea" is sadly needed in these days, which are both strenuous and easy-going.

The meaning of the word duty is so transparent that there is danger of its being misunderstood. At the risk, however, of being charged with a work of supererogation, a definition is here attempted.

Duty is the obligation to do what one believes

The Inward Light

to be right, which belief is based on the revelations of the Inward Light. The responsibility of ascertaining what the right is, is implied, even if it seems not to be clearly made known. Duty is the force which impels us to learn what, in our circumstances and with our abilities, we ought to do ; and the equally strong imperative, which every man feels, to do that which he has discovered to be right. It is always one's duty to be honest ; to keep promises, unless there be a valid reason for breaking them ; to be loyal to the terms and intentions of a contract, and, according to ability and opportunity, to seek that which is best for ourselves and for our fellow men. Duty carries the idea of debt. A debt to whom ? To ourselves, because in no other way can our moral sense be at peace ; to our fellow men, because their welfare requires from us that which we feel that they have a right to ask of us ; to the universe, because we are parts of the infinite unity ; and to God, because He has so constituted every human being that rest and peace can be found only

The Sanctity of Duty

as they are found in rendering to Him the things which belong to Him. Duty is a debt which men owe to themselves, to their fellow men, to the universe, and to God.

If the consciousness of obligation be weak, persistent disregard has made it so. If any man can continuously ignore its claims, it is because his moral nature has been weakened or atrophied by neglect. When one is told that duty requires a thing, he has no difficulty in understanding what is meant. Some words carry their definitions in their faces, and duty is one of those words. It is the obligation to discover, if possible, the right, and then to do it.

All men are so constituted that they recognize that duty is holy. A force within impels every human being toward truth and righteousness. That fact carries with it another fact still more significant, viz., duty is in itself a revelation. If there were but one intelligent being in the universe, he could feel no obligation, because no one is conscious of any moral relation to things. When duty is

The Inward Light

violated, we experience compunction, for the reason that we recognize that we have neglected a person higher than ourselves. "The misery of self-contempt flows from some inner reverence insulted." (Martineau, "Types of Ethical Theory," vol. ii, p. 75.) To do wrong is to cause one's self to feel a pang of conscience, and it is also to insult a person on whom we feel ourselves to be dependent, and to whom we know ourselves to be obligated. The claims of right and truth are holy, and can be ignored only at the risk of moral peril and suffering. This fact has the force and evidence of an elemental law. We owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to the Being whose will is revealed in conscience, to be loyal to truth and right so far as it is possible for us to know them. And truth and right, so far as they are essential to the life of man on earth, are revealed within the soul of man.

A swiftly increasing tendency to hold lightly the standards of fundamental morality is discernible in our time. To talk about ethical loyalty is easy enough, but when we come to

The Sanctity of Duty

the specific inquiry, "What is right?" a more difficult question is encountered. Not a few identify it with desire and self-interest. This is seen in the way in which the marriage relation is regarded; in the ease with which society drifts into gambling in private parlors and at fashionable resorts; and still more lamentably is it found in the toleration in ourselves, and in others, of personal habits that are indecent and vile. The distinction between right and wrong is not being effaced theoretically, but it is practically; and it is high time that our age was reminded of the grand and simple fundamentals of the moral life, and made to realize that essential ethical principles are clearly written in the human soul, and in the moral order of which we are a part. When the inevitableness of the law and penalty is found in the constitution of our souls, there will be fewer to tolerate compromises between the flesh and the spirit. Neither genius nor social position can rightfully claim exemption from the moral law. If marriage is holy, then to treat it as if it were a mere contract

The Inward Light

is wrong. If gambling at Monte Carlo is a sin, then in every walk of life anything by which men try to get something for nothing is equally wrong. If impurity is a vice in the lower East Side of Manhattan, it is not less so in upper Fifth Avenue and in the suburbs. When men are honest with themselves, there is no doubt in their own minds as to what they should do. The Inward Light illuminates the whole horizon of moral obligation. The pressure of the imperative is then distinct and strong. But here is the difficulty: Many who are scrupulously honest in their dealings with others are not honest with themselves. Because of heedlessness, or by reason of sophistry, by shutting their eyes to the precepts engraved within, or because of simple selfishness, they try to make themselves believe that they are not bound by the same laws which bind others; they imagine that they can walk on hot coals without burning their feet. But no sophistry, and no passion, can blot out the division between the truth and error, and between right and wrong.

The Sanctity of Duty

That line of separation is in the human constitution, and it is universal and everlasting. The sanctity of duty is ignored by those who lightly hold the contracts to which they have subscribed. My illustration here shall be clear and simple. Those who enter into church-membership assume definite and easily understood obligations. There is little room for misunderstanding, and no burden is laid upon any. An obligation assumed in a church is of the same nature as every other obligation, and it should not be forgotten that the Church exists for the sake of the man, and that no man was brought into existence simply for the Church. Of course, a pledge should be interpreted by its spirit rather than by the letter. Moreover, duties do not conflict. If a man is called elsewhere, surely he ought not be at the Church. But how do many of those persons, who in such large numbers become members of the Churches, reconcile their conduct with their vows? How do those who have time and strength for other engagements, and have no time for fulfilling their

The Inward Light

promises to the Church, reconcile their course with the very simple covenant into which they entered in becoming church members? This illustration brings into clear relief the ease and nonchalance with which solemn obligations are ignored; it presents the subject in its simplest form. One would suppose that the claims of such a duty would be strongest, but in reality they seem to have no force. The lifting of a finger on the Stock Exchange is binding, even if thereby a man lose his fortune; but the covenant of a Church, even when entered into with the most solemn ritual, oft-times is laid aside as easily as a garment. This is one of the ethical anomalies which can be deplored much more easily than it can be explained. Of course, all men live in relations, and our duty to one person or to one institution has to be adjusted to our duties to other persons and to other institutions. A person has his home, and his duty to that is sacred; he is a citizen, and his duty to the State is sacred; he has social responsibilities, and he ought to do his part in making the common

The Sanctity of Duty

life happy and bright. All this is fully granted. My question has not to do with those who have to adjust one pledge to another, but with those who serenely ignore all promises; who have money enough for pleasure, but none for charity; who have strength enough for business, but none for the service of humanity; who have unlimited time for self-indulgence, but none for gatherings where religious questions of serious importance are to be considered.

All decisions should be based on moral principle. A man should not ask what another person thinks he ought to do, but rather should stand fast by what, from looking within, he has discerned for himself to be right. Each man should be loyal to his own convictions. For him they are the will of God. They can be neglected, or violated, only at the risk of moral atrophy and spiritual ruin.

Another illustration of the ease with which fundamental obligations are ignored is found in the prevalent neglect by the wealthy, and often by the cultivated classes, of political

The Inward Light

responsibilities. This evil has come to be recognized, in some quarters, as little less than calamitous. In those countries where the laws are made and executed by representatives of the people, wise legislation and a consistent administration of affairs depend on the response of all citizens to the call of the Government. Not only personal liberty, but also the moral and spiritual welfare of individuals and of the State, depend on the fidelity with which political obligations are discharged. With what heedlessness, however, are they neglected by many of those who have most leisure and most ability! The very persons who should defend the interests of the people, leave them to be despoiled by those whose eyes are open only to opportunities of self-aggrandizement. Not a few be-moan conditions which they do nothing to improve. As to the necessity of loyalty in the service of the State there is no room for doubt. But the primary political meeting, where policies are determined and nominations made, has little chance of recognition

The Sanctity of Duty

when it has to compete with some social function; and voting, which is as holy a service as that of worship, is forgotten in the excitement of "the races," or of a fashionable festivity. This is not because of ignorance, but because those who know what is right do not think of the right as having imperative claims. Duty is always sacred. It is not like an external law, which can be broken with impunity; it is rather an expression of truth which is graven in the moral order of the universe, and revealed in the consciousness of every man. The remedy for this evil lies in the direction of a stronger emphasis on the revelations of the light that shines within. The tendency to neglect responsibilities is a disease which comes dangerously near the vital parts of the social organism. The State suffers because a large proportion of her citizens hold lightly to their political obligations. When men are made to realize that all duties are imperative, that the violation of a moral law involves consequences even more serious than the breaking of physical laws, that its

The Inward Light

neglect is sure to result in ruin and death, they will with less flippancy ignore fundamental morality. The only possible hope of better conditions is to be found in helping men to appreciate that whether there be external legislation, or only internal revelation, the voice of duty has the force and sanctity of a Divine command. No single responsibility will be overlooked when all are recognized as sacred.

The chief peril of modern life is that the people will become accustomed to asking, What will please? or, What will command applause? rather than, What is right? And it is not difficult for any to learn what the right is. No man is in any serious danger of going astray so long as he is faithful to his own inner visions, and so long as he follows their attractions; but when duty no longer holds, he is in peril of moral ruin.

There is such a thing as slavery to duty, although no very large part of the human race is suffering from that bondage. One of the hardest questions which a moral leader has

The Sanctity of Duty

to answer is this : How may I present my subject so that those who need it will feel its force, and so that those who are already quite careful enough about their obligations will be kept from feeling the weight of an added burden? The genius which many persons have for applying truths to others is equalled only by the anxiety of a few to take more than they need.

Moral slavery results, usually, from neglect of proper emphasis on specific duties, rather than from a deliberate choice of that which is evil. One thinks only of his church, and neglects his home and his community. Another is a politician; he has time enough for caucuses, but none for prayer-meetings. Another is engrossed in business; he has business for breakfast, dinner, and supper—business all day and business all night; if his children become cultured and accomplished, it will be because of their mother or their surroundings; no credit will be due to him. Such a man is not a slave to duty; he is a slave to his own folly. He worships at a golden

The Inward Light

shrine to which he has given a sacred name.

At this point we must once more consider the relativity of duties. It is not always easy to discriminate between what seems to be imperative and what actually is so. "Duties never conflict." Each man's duty calls him to do the most important thing that requires to be done at a given time. But how can that be, when at the same time we seem to be drawn in so many different directions? This evening I have a service at the church, where I am expected; at the same hour a primary political meeting is to be held and important issues are to be decided; my family are anxious that I should spend the evening with them; I am a member of an important committee which must convene to-night; I have some friends who will arrive from Europe, and they are expecting me to meet them; my neighbor is giving a reception, and he will be grieved if I am absent; my business is confused, and requires every moment of my time; and now the cli-

The Sanctity of Duty

max is reached—I have received a telegram telling me that my father is seriously ill and begging me to go to him at once. Can any sane man insist that duties never conflict, when simultaneously seven voices are calling in different directions? The case against the proverb is rather strong, but most men would recognize but a single duty, and that the one which has behind it the voice of kinship. At the moment when that was heard all other demands ceased to be duties. When any man listens to the voices which speak within with a desire to know what their message is, he is seldom long left in doubt. The Inward Light permits no delusions. Only those who wish to be are deceived. There is no collision between duties; what seems to be collision is only conflict between desire and self-interest, on the one hand, with what is right on the other. Duty is relative to circumstances, abilities, and relationships. Ability is the measure of obligation. “Slavery to duty” is usually a false emphasis on what in other circumstances might be a duty. No man ought to ruin his

The Inward Light

health by overwork, and very few do. No man ought to be so honest in stating his opinions as to misrepresent himself ; occasionally a very few do. It is no man's duty to give to charity that which belongs to his creditors ; the number who do that can easily be counted. It is a sad fact, however, that most of the important work of the world is done by a limited number. The majority of people seem to have no feeling of responsibility, and are willing that their fellow men should perform all the labor, if only they themselves can get the lion's share of the profits. They allow others to build the churches, and then shut their pockets tightly when the debts are to be paid ; they send their children to colleges which others have endowed, and never ask if they may add a little to the endowment ; they employ the nurses who are trained in the hospitals which others have erected, but never give anything to improve the hospitals ; they read the books in the libraries which others have built, but never give a book themselves ; they enjoy to the full the benefits of the com-

The Sanctity of Duty

munity in which they dwell, but never take the trouble to go to a primary meeting where policies are settled, and they neglect often even to vote. They sit on cushions in the stern of the church boat, the municipal boat, the social boat, and let someone else do all the rowing, while they complain that the boat is not larger, or the cushions softer, or the luncheon more appetizing.

How may men be made to realize that they have duties? that a duty is always sacred? that when one hears its call he hears the voice of God? Why should the sweet compensations of service be left for a few to enjoy? Why should the burdens of duty be left for a few to bear? There is no higher moral or spiritual level than recognition of the sanctity of obligation. The best work of the world is not the result of compulsion; it is rather the glad response of those who feel that to them has been offered a great privilege. Loyalty to duty is good, but the enthusiasm of love is better; the former may nerve men to stoical strength, but only the latter will inspire the

The Inward Light

enthusiasm of sainthood. He who obeys God because he knows that he ought to do so, is a righteous man; but he who serves his fellow men solely because he loves them, and not merely with hope of winning heaven or escaping hell, has the spirit of the Saviour of the world. Christianity is such a revelation of God as makes it possible for men to fall in love with Him, and therefore to be faithful, not merely because it is right, but because it is our Father's will. Those who realize that love besets them behind and before soon find that the task disappears, and that the thrill of a wondrous enthusiasm takes its place. The common injunction to spend much time with Jesus Christ is based on the fact that those who associate with Him will see as He sees, think as He thinks, and act from His motives. He who realizes that God loves him with all the fervor and fidelity of the passion that took Jesus to His cross, will be drawn to truth and right by the power of an infinite affection, as the planets are held in their orbits by the attractions of the sun.

The Sanctity of Duty

Loyalty to duty is the noblest human achievement; but a passion for righteousness and an enthusiasm for humanity are the Divine gift to all who have opened mind and heart to the revelations of the Spirit of the universe.

I cannot better close this chapter than by condensing its entire contents into two exhortations of Victor Charbanal, in "The Victorious Life," and then by adding a third:

"Live your own life."

"Let nothing get between your soul and the truth."

Trust the Inward Light, and the pathway of duty will be clear.

The Inward Calvary

CHAPTER SIXTH

The Inward Calvary



THE greatest truths are the simplest, and that which seems to be supernatural is also most natural. The solemn mystery of Calvary, and of its cross, have been approached, usually, as if they were unique, transcending all other facts and events in heaven above and the earth beneath. If anything is absolutely unique it is beyond human ability to grasp. The being who is like no other being will be unintelligible to persons like ourselves. Uniqueness necessitates unintelligibility. If a creature is to be understood, he must be enough like ourselves to furnish a clue to his nature; and if any event is to be interpreted by us, or is to influence us, it must have relations to human beings. If the Deity is utterly unlike men, He will be forever unknowable. If the doctrine of the Cross, which

The Inward Light

many have regarded as the central doctrine of our religion, belongs exclusively to the supernatural, then, for all practical purposes, it might as well never have been formulated. The attraction of the Cross is in its naturalness; in its humanitarian quality. It is believed to be from above, because it is the idealization of that which is best in man. The divinest reality is the expression of all that is highest and most universal in humanity. Browning's phrase, "most human and yet most Divine," is strictly accurate. The most Divine must be seen to be most human before it can be understood to be most Divine. For us God is only that part of infinity which can be comprehended by beings like ourselves; beyond that lies mystery, but mystery as such has little influence. The majesty of the ocean fills us with awe, but that which lies beyond the horizon's rim makes no impression. Our God is only so much as we can grasp of the Infinite. Jesus is drawing the world unto Himself, because wherever He is lifted up He is recognized as the apotheosis

The Inward Calvary

of what is perfect and universal in humanity. The Inward Calvary! At first sound that phrase is startling, and to some may seem almost shocking; but the more it is pondered the more significant it appears. This is because the thought behind the phrase is older even than Calvary near Jerusalem; as old, even, as the history of humanity. What does it signify? What does that other Calvary signify from which the name is derived? Is it not sacrifice for love's sake—reaching even to the most remote of the undeserving? No sacrifice, not even death, is too great for love. Sacrifice is the finest flower of love; and love without willingness to die for the one loved is so far short of perfection. Calvary is the affirmation that sacrifice is central and vital in love; it is an illustration of the fact that love in Deity is not different in kind from what it is in humanity; and that Divine love can be interpreted to man only in the terms of human sacrifice. How much does one human being love another? "He is willing to die for him!" Language can tell no more.

The Inward Light

How much does God love men? Again the answer is found in sacrifice reaching to death. There are mysteries here with which, as this is not a theodicy, it is not necessary for us to deal. Calvary reveals the length to which love, according to its perfection, must go. Love takes little account of worth. It reaches directly for being, and seldom asks as to the quality of the being. It will seek the best for the object of its devotion; but its action often seems to be absurd, because it so insistently presses itself upon those who deserve nothing but reprobation. The elder brother in the parable had a good case. He had a right to expect more than the younger, who was a reprobate; yet the father gave his very best to one whose only record was disgrace. Illustrations of Love's inexplicable way of forcing itself upon those who are not worthy abound in all classes of society. Mothers will not give up vicious boys; wives cling to husbands when they know them to be unfaithful; children return good for evil with a constancy that angels could not surpass. Love disregards consequences

The Inward Calvary

and laughs at appearances. It is never so proud as when it is most humiliated, if it only has an opportunity of serving the object of its affection. It is unlike anything else that is human. According to its approach toward perfection, love in man is exactly like love in God. The only difference is, that one is limited and the other is absolute.

With the external Calvary we are familiar, but that it is only an illustration in larger relations, and in objective conditions, of an infinite and universal principle, is a fact which few have firmly grasped.

Calvary is a necessity to love. Love is always something inward. It manifests itself in outward acts, but the outward act is to the inward experience as a single ray of light to the splendor that floods the firmament. The Calvary within, or the sacrifice essential in love, is ever most inadequately expressed in outward symbol or event. Even the glory of the Cross of Christ was but a faint suggestion of the illimitable possibility of sacrifice which is forever immanent in the Almighty.

The Inward Light

Love always leads to the Cross. And why? Because it must, at least for a long time to come, live in company with suffering, sorrow, and sin. No theorizing as to the origin or uses of these dark facts is necessary here. Enough for our present purposes to remind ourselves that escape from them is impossible. Foolish, indeed, are those who endeavor to evade them by denying them. To be appreciated, they need not be emphasized. They force themselves on attention in their own remorseless way when least expected. They give a quality of inevitableness to Calvary, because it is of the nature of love to enter into the condition of its object and to bear all its burdens.

Suppose we personify Love, and imagine her to be looking out over the landscape. She covets happiness, health, prosperity, and moral sanity for the objects of her affection. But what does she see? Everywhere those who have capacity for happiness carrying about with them breaking hearts. "There is no God," the fool had said, but none, There is no sor-

The Inward Calvary

row." Love with its infinite yearning beholds this barren and black desolation of grief; can it do otherwise than suffer also? But that fair and beautiful spirit sees not only grief, which she cannot at once relieve; she sees also physical suffering. Which is the more difficult to endure? No one may answer, for both are hard enough to bear. A brute may look on disease and pain and be unmoved, but the human being was never yet born who did not suffer at the sight of sickness and death, in proportion as he loved those who were the victims. Creon, in "The Antigone," would not respond to compassion until calamity overtook his own household and death claimed his dearest; then he cried: "Ah, me! To no one else can this be shifted from my guilty self. . . . Take me, my servants, take me straightway hence to be no more than nothing." (Palmer's translation, p. 91.)

What an epic would he compose who should write the story of the effect of sickness and pain on Love! What a composite photograph would that be which should condense the faces

The Inward Light

of all who, for Love's sake, have watched day and night by sick-beds and death-beds, seeking no compensation, ministering thus because they were bound to those sufferers by chains stronger than steel! I have imagined, sometimes, that such a photograph would be startlingly like the face of Jesus on the cross; but then I remember that the world contains no portrait of that face, and that such imaginations are in vain.

Out of her casement once more looks Love, whom just now we are thinking of as a person with a great heart, and this day her eye falls on what men have been in the habit of calling sin. What does she behold? Human beings with possibilities like her own, choosing to live like beasts; neglecting one another; as bears struggle for meat, fighting for little pieces of yellow metal; forgetting their manhood in order to get more of it than their neighbors possess. She sees her very own, on whom she has leaned, whom she has trusted and believed to be pure, because of passion committing shameful deeds, which cause ruin

The Inward Calvary

and misery. As she looks she hears the cries of children crushed by greed, of women starved into sin, of men weeping for those whom they would help but cannot, until, overwhelmed at the spectacle, she says, This sight I can endure no longer. Some way out of this desolation must be found, and I must find it! Into this midnight Love goes seeking a clew out of the labyrinth of pain and sin and death.

For no reason except loyalty to herself, Love must bear griefs and carry sorrows. She cannot help entering into the condition of those who are in need of help. Love is a slave, but a slave to herself. The imperative of her own being has the inevitableness of fate. In this picture she has been personified, but she is not a person; she is rather an essential element in all personality. One can imagine a person without hands or eyes, but a being without capacity for love would not be a person. There must be capacity to think, choose, and love, or personality is absent. Love is as universal as personality, and therefore, since Love

The Inward Light

must always sacrifice for its object, and since the more utterly undeserving the object is the more Love insists on sacrifice; and because giving one's self for the undeserving is the essence of that Calvary near Jerusalem, we speak of the Inward Calvary, which is to be found in some degree in every human soul. Every parent carries about with him an inevitable Calvary. The mother literally pours out herself for her child who has no claim except the common tie of nature. And when that child has grown, and forgotten his mother and disgraced the very name she gave him, she does not change, but weeps and prays and plans and denies herself ease and companionship, and struggles on until the face grows thin and the hair grows white. Those who pass that woman on the street wonder at her features, so full of something which they cannot understand, yet the haunting power of which they cannot escape. They have caught a glimpse of a soul that is carrying about with it its own Calvary.

Friendship is the name which is given to the

The Inward Calvary

bond which unites two souls by love. If that friendship is not a mockery, they must share grief as well as joy. As a matter of fact, they do, and could not be satisfied otherwise. Friendship is lavish, like light; like the sun and rain, it goes out to the good and the bad alike. Is my friend crushed by the multitude of his afflictions? I must try to get my shoulder under at least a small part of his burden. Has he committed a crime? In proportion to the genuineness of my friendship I shall think little of the wrong he has done me, but much of the depth to which he has fallen, and of the greatness of his need of those who are loyal and wise. That was a rare friend who, when his partner had ruined him by embezzling all his securities, instead of turning from him, took him to his own home and kept him there in the society of those whom he had injured, but who felt no malice, until the throes of remorse had quieted and he was able to be a man again.

The Inward Calvary is a well-nigh universal reality. The Cross is not an isolated event in

The Inward Light

a far-past age; it inheres in humanity, and can be evaded by no one. Love carries within itself the possibility of suffering, and while sin, pain, and sorrow endure, the necessity of suffering will also endure. Love reaches not simply to those who are congenial, or who have something to give in return, but to the undeserving and neglectful. Love in man is the very same, in its nature, as that which came into preternatural expression when the heart of Jesus broke on Calvary.

What is the relation of that Inward Calvary to that other Calvary on which Jesus died? The one suggests the other. Is it possible to go further, and affirm that the former is a prophecy of the latter? Is there any vital relation between the two? Is the experience of Jesus peculiar only in so far as He, by the devotion and affection of His followers, has been lifted above other men? With Him, as with others, the Cross was inevitable. He could not have escaped it without escaping from Himself. Because of the perfection of

The Inward Calvary

His being, His Cross was the most conspicuous in history. Its power to redeem was not in its unlikeness to other crosses, but in the fact that it showed that the highest in humanity and the fulness of divinity alike yield to the necessity of sacrificing for the undeserving. God is love; Love is God; whosoever loveth is born of God. That love is of God, and that all love is sacrificial, we know; but whether the sacrifice of Jesus derives its pre-eminence from its likeness to that of other men, or from its singular transcendence, is a question of no importance. It was a typical human experience, and it was a revelation of God; and the clearest revelation of God that any have, they derive from those human beings who most loyally love. Love, according to the degree of its perfection, is a revelation of the Deity. It is not possible to imagine any love as more nearly perfect than that displayed on "The Green Hill Far Away." It was absolutely unselfish, and it included within its gracious ministries the most hostile and undeserving; therefore it is rightfully

The Inward Light

regarded as a Divine revelation. But love is not less Divine because in its essence it is always the same. It may differ in degree, but never in kind. The ocean which pours its floods into some great gulf is not less the ocean because at the same time it fills to running over a thousand little bays and estuaries; and the light which glorifies the great eastern window of Westminster Abbey is the same light that, softened and subdued, fills the chapels and cloisters, and even creeps into the crypt. To say that the sacrifice of a mother's heart, or the giving of a friend's life for one whom he would save, differs nothing in its nature from the sacrifice of Christ, detracts nothing from the glory of that perfect oblation of which our poorer offerings are types and prophecies.

What is the relation between the Inward and the Outward Calvary? The Inward shows that the Outward was inevitable, because the partial is always the prophecy of the perfect, and the limited of the absolute. The proof that sacrifice pervades the universe, and be-

The Inward Calvary

longs even in the nature of God, is found in its presence in ourselves. If our love, imperfect as it is, reaches to and includes the most undeserving, much more must that perfect love which is above the limitations of weak and wearied humanity, and which is able to discern the worth of being as our poor powers can never do.

These thoughts, to one who meditates much upon them, are august and overwhelming. They represent the whole created universe as coming into manifestation on the cross of Jesus. In that cross was revealed a glimpse of the absolute love, which in no way differs essentially from the love in human hearts, except that it is vaster. The universe is not cruel. It is "red in tooth and claw" only as a surgeon might be called severe when he removes a cancer. The cruelty is apparent; it is not real. But the love which pervades the universe is permanent, and ever coming to clearer expression. The seaman who was saved from a wreck and who burst into tears when he remembered his canary bird that was lost; the

The Inward Light

father who, in the court, stood day by day at the side of his discredited and disgraced daughter; the mother who folded in her arms and kissed her leper child; the nurses who, without pay, go among the outcast and the vile; the yellow sons of Nippon, who sink their individuality and lay down their lives that the honor of their Emperor may be maintained; the missionaries who, without hope of reward, leave home and friends and bury themselves in distant lands, that they may add to the hope and blessing of others who have no claim on them save the common claim of humanity: all these show in limited manifestation the Divine attribute which comes into perfect manifestation on the Cross. "They are but broken lights of Thee, and Thou, O Lord, art more than they." They are faint hints of the nature of the force that impels the evolution of history and of the whole creation. The universe, in the final analysis, will be found to be sacrificial. Early in our thinking we are saddened by the prevalence of murder in nature. In deep melancholy we

The Inward Calvary

repeat these terrible lines, which have a semblance of truth in them:

*“Life evermore is fed by death,
In earth and sea and sky,
And that a rose may breathe its breath,
Something must die.”*

After experience has brought clearer vision, behind the apparently cruel facts we behold the movement of a higher and a beneficent law, which is slowly, but surely, regenerating all men and all things, whereof love and sacrifice in man are the pledge and prophecy.

What will this world of ours be when the reality appears, of which both the Inward and the Outward Calvary are prophecies? When the vestiges of the lion and the tiger, of the dog and the hog, have all been eliminated, and only that which is like the Deity, and therefore loving, remains—what then? The inquiry opens vistas of progress which our eyes are too weak to penetrate. We may not follow them, but we need not fear to trust ourselves to them. Those vestiges of animal-

The Inward Light

ism are going. The brute is disappearing. The days of force and greed are numbered. Nations are building navies and drilling armies, but they are also making treaties that will make those armaments useless. There is still strife in the social order; but when millionaires are confessing that it is a shame to die rich, and when laboring men, in their spasmodic, blundering, and entirely mistaken ways, sacrifice themselves to prevent suffering among their fellows, as they do in every sympathetic strike, we may believe that, having learned wisdom by experience, they will yet be equally anxious to sacrifice comfort, and even life, that the welfare of the larger human brotherhood may be promoted. The Inward Calvary is the prophecy within ourselves of the time when men shall compete in service, and for opportunity to sacrifice, as now they compete for gold and power; of the time when the ambition of the whole race shall be not "to be ministered unto, but to minister."

It is long since I have read Bushnell on "The

The Inward Calvary

Vicarious Sacrifice," but I cannot close this study without a reference to the impression which was made upon my mind as in that great work the author showed that all men and all angels are in vicarious sacrifice, and that even the Almighty Himself is not exempt from the sweep of this universal and self-imposed law. There is majesty and music in the very language in which the poet-preacher described the procession of history from the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to the Lamb, at the consummation of all things, in the midst of the throne. The glory of that conception is not diminished by the discovery that creation and progress have been by evolution, of which Bushnell knew little. That law does not suggest advance by unintelligent necessity, but growth according to an intelligent purpose and a beneficent plan, in which all the children of men may co-operate, and for whose perfection and blessing all things forever conspire. Evolution in the social order is the result of the cooperation of the human and the Divine. The Inward Cal-

The Inward Light

vary is the prophecy of the Outward, and the Outward is the revelation of what the Inward will sometime become. Now the love which is in God shines from our poor lives as light from a lantern dim with smoke; but, sometime, it will shine from just such beings as we are with the splendor and saving power with which it has glorified the life and the death of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Ultimate Authority

CHAPTER SEVENTH

The Ultimate Authority



THE doctrine of the Inward Light, if properly understood and more carefully heeded, would solve many dark problems both of thought and of experience.

The highest court of appeal is within every man. This is Paul's doctrine when he writes of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits; or of the indwelling God confirming the highest intellectual conclusions and the deepest moral convictions of intelligent and pure souls. When the Spirit of God and the spirit in man agree, a basis for authority has been reached. There is then harmony between the conscience and the reason, and the man is no longer disturbed by doubt. The Spirit of God has His dwelling in every human being. He utters no audible voice; His decisions are not written in books; they are whispered in that stillness in

The Inward Light

which spirit holds communion with spirit. The Spirit of the universe communicates His wisdom to mortal men. The belief in inspiration and revelation which has prevailed in all ages and among all peoples involves this conception. No friend can tell to us whether we are moving toward the spiritual heights. There are no writings to which one may refer for such assurance, but there is a still small voice which may be heard in the innermost silences, and its testimony may be trusted.

A subject attracting much attention in our time is, *The Ultimate Authority in Religion*. Sabatier's remarkable book entitled "*Religions of Authority versus The Religion of the Spirit*," did not appear until these essays were nearly written, but Martineau's "*Authority in Religion*" had made for itself a distinct place in the modern world. Both deal with phases of this theme. Why should we believe in the fundamental concepts of religion? This inquiry leads directly to our theory of knowledge, and to the question whether there be any ultimate spiritual

The Ultimate Authority

authority. Religion divides itself into two grand divisions: "Religions of Authority" and "the Religion of the Spirit," to use Sabatier's phrase; or into religions whose court of appeal is external, and those in which it is internal; or, again, into those which find the ultimate authority in man and those which find it in God. Three forms of religion are now appealing for recognition. The first locates authority in the Church, or in the State as the political side of the Church; the second finds it in some sacred writings, as in the Bible; the third teaches that the Spirit of God actually communicates Divine wisdom to the spirit of man.

If one inquires as to spiritual truth, he is sure to receive at least three widely different answers.

One class of thinkers will tell him that he will find in the Church all the information that he needs, and that to the Church he should bow. What shall I believe? Ask the Church. What ought I to do? Ask the Church. But why trust the Church? Because it is the depository of

The Inward Light

truth; because when it speaks God speaks. That seems to open an easy way out of spiritual difficulties, but it raises more difficulties than it settles. Certain queries arise concerning this institution for which such claims are made. Is the Church infallible? How may this infallibility be known? To the outward eye the Church is a society of very fallible folk. It has not always sought the best things, and many of its methods have been such as to repel lofty and pure souls. Is not the Church composed of men? Are not men always limited and fallible? By what process do fallible men, when brought together into a society, become infallible? Have not many of the councils of the Church manifested a spirit well-nigh diabolical? That of Nicæa defined and authorized the doctrine of the Trinity. Were the members of that council models of wisdom or virtue? Constantine was one of them, and Constantine was a murderer. The disorder in the meetings of that body was often so great that force had to be used to quell the disturbance. The attempt to show

The Ultimate Authority

that the Church is fit to exercise spiritual authority meets little encouragement. The Church is a society of men working together for the realization of Christian ideals. As such it is worthy of all praise ; but when it assumes to be an authority beyond appeal, and presumes to dictate what must be believed, and what courses of conduct should be followed, it makes itself an object of derision. In the past, it has required noble and truly inspired men to submit their mental and spiritual processes to rulers who sometimes have been fools, sometimes knaves, and at all times so full of problems of their own as to have little time for those of their fellow men. The claim that infallibility resides in the Church is too ridiculous for attention even though it may have behind it ecclesiastics as saintly as Leo XIII. and the present Pope. To require allegiance to such an authority would be to ask that reason and common sense be ignored—which would be a sin against the Holy Ghost.

Those who find the final authority for the spiritual life in the Bible, do not essentially

The Inward Light

differ from those who find it in the Church. At first it appears to be an easy and sure solution of all problems of thinking and living to be able to go to an authoritative book, and have it remove all difficulties; but troubles multiply the farther this road is followed. How do we know that the Bible may be trusted to such an extent? Is it replied that the Bible asserts its authority? If it does, I know neither the verse nor the chapter; but, granting that it does, what then? The same claim is made for the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, and the Upanishads. That assumption may be made for any writing. Assertion is not proof. If the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, and the Bible assert full spiritual authority, it is evident that all cannot be true, inasmuch as they often contradict one another. Either such assumptions are false, or the reason for believing them true is something other than its own assertion.

Moreover, perplexing inquiries arise as this subject is pursued. These Scriptures, which we call the Bible, were written by different

The Ultimate Authority

men, in widely separated periods of history. They represent various types of literature. Some of them are compilations from still older documents which have been, probably, forever lost. The Book of Jasher is known only by a single reference. There are at least three distinct narratives underneath the Pentateuch; those narratives are lost. The Gospels are supposed to have been compiled from now unknown records of the words and deeds of Jesus—none the less valuable for that—a fact which increases the difficulty of recognizing their authority as final. Many of these books were written in languages long since dead, and two of which languages have been greatly corrupted. In that fact there is both an advantage and a disadvantage. The language is no longer changing—that is an advantage; but it is no longer living, and consequently is more uncertain and difficult of interpretation. When the Scriptures were written many words meant something quite different from what they mean now. If a truth has been translated from a language

The Inward Light

which has been dead a thousand years into a language which is steadily changing, its precise significance may easily have been sacrificed in the transition. Moreover, the question of temperament is an important one. Emphasis has much to do with the interpretation of any writing, and emphasis is a matter of temperament. An impulsive man will put into words a meaning that calm and phlegmatic persons would never discern.

Here is the problem: With sincerity and with deep anxiety we ask for the foundations of certainty in religion. We desire to know and to do right; but we cannot stifle the voices that insist on asking, "What is truth? What is right? Who shall tell us?" One reply is, "Consult the Church. The Church is infallible, because God dwells in it." That leads us to ask for the criteria of infallibility. Has the Church never uttered dicta which have been found untrue? or pursued policies which have not been right? One such example would destroy all its claims to infallibility. The pages of history are red with the records of

The Ultimate Authority

its mistakes. The Church, considered in the light of its entire history, is the noblest of human institutions, but it is not perfect. Those who have been trained in the principles of the Puritans, or those who have the spirit of the Puritans, will never recognize the authority of any man, or of any body of men, because of their claims to infallibility. We would not buy an acre of ground without searching the title; much less would we trust our immortal destiny, or even our present moral decision and action, to those whose only right to be heard is in what they arrogate to themselves.

But some one answers: "The Church, indeed, is composed of fallible men; its word ought not to be final; but there is a true Word of God, and that is the Bible." Turning to the Bible for an answer to the questions which confuse the mind and burden the heart, we find, as has already been observed, that in large part it was written thousands of years ago in languages now dead, by men of whom we know little if anything, who lived in an

The Inward Light

environment impossible of reproduction, or of thorough understanding by us. Their words have been translated, and the perils of translation are many. How may we be sure that those words meant the same to the men who wrote them as to those who read them now? But still our souls long for certainty. Where shall it be found? Is there no court of appeal? Yes, there is an authority; but it is not in any official, or in any body of men, or in any council, or in any church, in any creed or in any book, however true or ancient. There is but one court of final appeal, and that is God. That which is true and right in His sight must be discovered, or satisfaction will be forever impossible. The basis of authority is in God alone.

The question then becomes this: Has God ever revealed Himself so that ethics and religion may be studied in the light of His revealed Will? The answer is, "Yes; the Spirit bears witness within our spirits." God speaks to man in an intimate, personal, and verifiable way. In His personal manifestation within the soul

The Ultimate Authority

are to be found the sacred symbols of authority. God is the final authority, and He is made known in all who are pure enough to discern His presence. When I hear the still voice speaking in my own soul, I hear God. When I bring my perplexities into the light which shines within, and am honest and sincere, then I am able to discover the truth and right as they are seen when looked at from above. How may the inner voice be known to be God's voice? May it not be merely the echo of our own desires? Who is gifted to recognize God when He speaks? And if He did reveal His will, would we be able to appreciate His message? Possibly the voice is real; but may it not have come from some disembodied spirit who may be either good or bad?

Of the teaching of the Bible concerning this point there is no need of uncertainty. Jesus regarded the inner voice and the inner light as both Divine. But how may *we* be made equally confident? John said: "Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether

The Inward Light

they are of God." An important but not an easy task.

Those who have accepted Jesus as Master of their spirits measure all claims to spiritual supremacy by His teaching as it is interpreted in His life; but the inquiry goes back even of the person of Jesus; for before we can accept Him as Master we have to inquire, "Why?" and that "why" compels us to seek the reason for believing that the inner voice and light are Divine. Jesus declared that His ministry as a spiritual leader would be continued by the Spirit of Truth. Was He correct? I approach this part of my subject knowing well the difficulty of making it clear and satisfying to others.

Why should we believe that the voice speaking within is from God? Because all men, when they listen to it, have revealed to them those truths which are needed for the purposes of life. The fact that those truths meet our deepest human needs is evidence of their divine origin. But do not different men receive different messages? Did not the Hindoo mother,

The Ultimate Authority

when she threw her child into the Ganges, do what she believed to be right? Yet to us the act seems barbarism. I doubt if a Hindoo mother ever really believed that such a requirement was right. She yielded to custom and to tradition rather than to conscience. To them the sense of right had given place. No mother, however dense her ignorance, who was true to herself, ever sacrificed her child to any god. The motherly heart instinctively rebels against the tyranny of such horrible teaching. The Hindoo mother sacrificed her child because she listened to authorities outside herself, rather than to the voice that speaks within. Even in heathenism the light is clear enough to reveal what is true and right; and it would do so if men would break away from the tyranny of tradition and custom.

What, then, are some of the subjects concerning which all men need knowledge?

All men need to know what right and truth are, so far as they are related to the conditions in which all must live. Is there any

The Inward Light

escape for the penitent from the inevitable consequences of wrong-doing? Is there behind phenomena an intelligent and loving Being in whom all may trust? These questions are answered in the Inward Light, which some may call the light of nature, but which I prefer to call the light of God. The soul can be satisfied only with truth and right. The universal feeling of dependence is a prophecy that, when the light is bright enough, the One on whom all are dependent will be disclosed. Every one prays sometime and in some way; this shows that we instinctively, although it may be dimly, feel the presence of a higher Power; every one believes in the possibility of spiritual deliverance—that universal belief prophesies a deliverer. If one would live up to his highest ideals of right, he would find that he is living, or growing to live, in accordance with the universal ideals; if he would only do what he really and deeply thinks is right, and not what some outside authority tells him is right, he would seldom do wrong; if he would trust to the Being to

The Ultimate Authority

whom he instinctively prays, he would find that he is trusting God; if he would commit himself to the God whom he trusts, he would never doubt the possibility of rising. In other words, the witness of the Spirit within exactly coincides with the teaching of Jesus without. Here observe that the way of Jesus was to offer His teaching not as authority primarily, but rather as testimony. The Spirit or the light which lighteth every man, puts into clear relief the truths which men need. Faith believes that they are from the Perfect One, because they never fail to inspire and ennoble when honestly studied and resolutely followed. The Inward Light reveals the truths which satisfy the profound, constant, and universal aspirations of humanity. The true, the beautiful, the good are essential to intellectual peace. Unless the spiritual nature has been degraded, when anything evil, untrue, unloving is presented to it, it at once rebels. Men love darkness not because it is their nature to do so, but because their deeds are evil. Only truth, beauty, love are worthy of im-

The Inward Light

mortal beings. The spirit which is in man by nature bears witness to this fact. The whole race hates a lie: that is evident from the subterfuges which are used to justify lying. Every one loves beauty: it is essentially good. The hues of the rainbow, the splendor of the sky, the figure and the color of a well proportioned man or woman everywhere attract admiration. Beauty pleases: ugliness repels. Spiritual beauty possesses a magic which sometimes glorifies even a homely face. Now and then physical beauty for a little time conceals spiritual vileness. When any teaching, or any person, is brought into the Inward Light, he is seen to be either beautiful or ugly. There is seldom any disagreement on this point. That which the Spirit of Christ calls vile the natural man knows to be ugly. Sane souls admire harmony: and the supreme harmony is the blending of the human will with the Divine.

Goodness alone satisfies: this also is self-evident. Evil causes division: goodness unites. There are no deep discords between good men

The Ultimate Authority

who keep to their goodness, and there is very little difference of opinion between the barbarian and the Christian as to the nature of goodness. Savages can be fascinated by a loving soul. Love conquers hate. When the Jesuit missionaries in Canada were massacred by savages, the murderers, when they saw how bravely the Christians died, sought to drink their blood, that they might be like them. Purity and heroism always attract and transform. When the teachings of any Master are brought into the Inward Light their essential nature is always disclosed. Nothing can escape "that deep revealing." In its radiance the true, the beautiful, and the good are made manifest. That which endures this testing, faith declares must be divine. It is a matter of faith at last; but here, surely, faith is belief on credible evidence.

The best in humanity is the fullest possible disclosure of God. It is the perfect man who is called "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." We most firmly trust that man whom we re-

The Inward Light

gard as nearest perfect. Those who believe in the perfect humanity of Jesus are confident of His divinity. This is highly significant; He who limits the divinity of Christ also questions His perfection as a man. It would be impossible to distinguish the absolutely perfect man from very God. The teaching of Jesus and the experiences of the human race meet at this point. The Spirit of God interprets the teaching of Jesus, adapting it to each new time; and that teaching agrees with what our own spirits assure us is best, when they have a fair chance to be heard. They tell us that we should worship the best of which we can conceive, and the race always has done so; and the Spirit from without gives a name to that best, and declares that it is God. That which is most human is also most divine.

Thus we come to the ultimate authority. Each man has to decide every question for himself. He longs to know about truth and right, about the beautiful and the loving, about duty and destiny. Whither shall he turn? There are churches many and creeds number-

The Ultimate Authority

less. He asks them, but quickly discovers that the creeds condense the conclusions of fallible men, and that churches may make mistakes. There are Bibles many, and some are better than others; but even the one which seems to be the best of all is written in dead languages. And how is one to know whether the men who wrote these books were infallible? At last, weary and worn by the confusion of his quest, he asks, "Is there no certainty? Must I remain forever unsettled in mind and heart? Is there no authority?" Then he meditates thus with himself: The final authority must be the Perfect One—that is God; but how am I to find God? And how may I be sure of His truth and His will? There are many professed revelations; how shall I decide which to trust? To this eager and pathetic inquiry I know but one answer. Each inquirer must dare to trust the revelation which has come to him. Each individual inquirer is a person who stands in vital relation with the Infinite Person. Each one is as near to God as to any other man or any body of men

The Inward Light

can be. If God speaks to anyone, He will speak to me. I listen eagerly, honestly, determined at last that I will not ask what I wish to have true and right, but I will ask only what truth and right actually are. The longer I listen the more the wonder grows, for the response commends itself both to reason and to conscience; it satisfies. Then I exclaim, "If I could only be sure that this inner voice is trustworthy!" At this point faith takes us in hand. That which satisfies both the reason and the moral sense ought to be believed and acted on until it is proved to be false. But may it not be that what commends itself to me as true and good is mere delusion—something that my own faculties have projected? The only way to answer that is to learn whether the experience is individual or universal. Thus we are led to study history, and the experiences of other men, as they are preserved in the literature of the world. Doing that, we find in all ages and in all lands, in proportion as men have distrusted mere outward authority, and have been loyal to the

The Ultimate Authority

Inward Light, that they have approximated the perfect humanity. They have not been deceived. At last we come to the Person of Christ, and inquire, What of Him? He only asked to be believed because He incarnated the truth; when He died, He left no writings and gave no code of laws; He simply committed His disciples to the leadership of the Spirit of Truth, saying, "He will lead you into all the truth." Who is more worthy of confidence than He who requires of His disciples only that they follow the Spirit of Truth? Ah! but how may I get full knowledge of the truth? Growth into that knowledge is a continuous process. Jesus Himself said that there were many mysteries which He could not reveal because His disciples were not then able to bear them. They were to be made known later. The revelations will go on while the mind of man shall grow, and while any secret place in the being of the Deity remains to be explored; and that will be forever. What in the future may come into the field of vision out of the starry heavens or out of the

The Inward Light

depths of the human soul? No one needs to try even to imagine. Enough for us that nothing will be revealed which will violate reason or the moral nature. The teaching which reveals the Eternal God, and the whole created universe, in service and sacrifice for the perfecting of the children of men, is one that never can be transcended. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and then, when the inevitable question rises as to whether he may not have made a mistake, let him give ear to these words, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Into that one utterance is condensed all that we need to know in this world, and

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

The Ultimate Standard

CHAPTER EIGHTH

The Ultimate Standard



THE ultimate authority in religion is God, as He is revealed in the soul of man; the ultimate standard in religion is Jesus Christ. The authority is internal, and the standard may be internal, but it is also and more evidently external. Auguste Sabatier has wisely said: "Christ is far more than the highest authority in Christianity. He is Christianity itself." And again: "The true and ultimate object of faith in Jesus Christ is therefore not the man Jesus, but the revelation of the Father which is in Him." ("Religions of Authority," p. 294.)

The Inward Light, and that which it reveals, are not identical. The Light shining in the soul is the indwelling God, who of necessity passes judgment on the ethical quality and spiritual value of the various impressions

The Inward Light

and precepts which make their appeal to the human will. He is the final authority in all matters of belief and conduct so far as they have a moral quality. But authority and standard are by no means the same, and the former without the latter would be like a court without any law. Is there a perfect ethical standard as well as an infallible court of appeal? It is one thing to know whether the right is being done; it is a very different thing to know what the right is. The authority decides as to the worth of the standard, and also as to whether its requirements are being realized. No standard has obligation in itself until it has been approved by the authority within; afterward it becomes obligatory, because it has upon it the stamp of truth, having stood the test of the Inward Light. A spiritual standard is a statement in words, or an expression in life, of that which it is the best to think and to do; of the truths and duties which ought to be recognized as beyond question and as imperative. It is the moral ideal so expressed as to be intelligible

The Ultimate Standard

and realizable. The standard is the embodied ideal.

Authority, on the other hand, implies two things, viz., the right to rule, and the right to discriminate and to decide. The final authority in an absolute monarchy is the emperor; in a democracy it is the people; with the individual soul it is God; in the civil State it is he who, because of the force which he possesses, can compel obedience. In the republic of souls the authority is He who by the perfection of His Being is infallible, and, therefore, He who by right passes judgment on conflicting standards. Because there is within all men a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, and a consciousness of obligation to choose the right and eschew the wrong, there is an internal standard as well as an internal authority. But that internal standard, like Leonardo's "Last Supper," with the lapse of years and continued neglect becomes indistinct, and requires reenforcement from without. When men no longer respond to impulses from within, they need

The Inward Light

to have set before them attractions which will waken them to clearer vision and intenser action. Every ideal has embodiment somewhere. Chivalry has had its Henry of Navarre and its Richard of the Lion Heart; heroism its Charles George Gordon and its Sir John Franklin; patriotism its Washington and Lincoln; reform its Cromwell and Mazzini; prophecy its Hosea and Isaiah; holiness its Jesus. The perfect ideal has the authority which belongs to truth and holiness. Every ideal sometime has an incarnation, and its power is due chiefly to the fact of incarnation. The ideal will hardly continue to exist apart from its embodiment. Abstractions convey no definite impressions. Love is always a man loving; and holiness is the sum of a man's faculties raised to their perfect state. Incarnation is the common factor in all religions. It is essential to the cognizability of an ideal. The incarnation of an ethical and spiritual standard is necessary to its clear appreciation and full realization. An external standard is a condition of growth in the ethical and

The Ultimate Standard

spiritual life. It is the expression of an object of effort, of the end of endeavor. It is the goal toward which the moral man is pressing. He who runs without knowing whither, will be sure to go astray; and he who tries to be good without any clear idea of what goodness is, will sadly blunder.

Growth in knowledge of what is right, and in saintly character, is not a simple process, nor is it always easy to follow. It may be called evolution, but evolution is always by means. It is a resident force working toward a well-defined end, but the attraction from without may be quite as efficient as the force within. An apple is a product of evolution, but there is more in that apple than the outworking of energy. The light of the sun, the moisture of the rain, and the chemistries of the earth, are in every apple. In the same way the evolution of man has been modified by his environment, a large part of which is always the expression of his ideals. The apple required influence from without to stimulate growth from within; so also does the evolu-

The Inward Light

tion of the human spirit. In the best of our race there is a tendency to revert to the state from which they have risen. Something of the lion and the tiger, as well as of the monkey and the ape, are found in those who have moved farthest toward the spiritual heights. Animal remnants cling to the skirts of emerging spirits. The santhest souls have been most keenly alive to their peril from the lower nature. Paul's experience with the law in his members warring against the law in his mind is typical. Who shall deliver from the body of death?—which means, how may we escape from the hands which are holding us in animalism? Sweeter voices are calling to higher realms, but the power to respond often seems wanting. In the process, or in the struggle, by which men are lifted above the earthly and the sensual to the spiritual state, all possible attractions are needed to counteract the grip of the lusts, which never willingly relinquish their hold.

The strongest attraction for an intelligent being is a life which embodies all its ideals

The Ultimate Standard

of perfection; a life which has form, and whose very existence proves that the heights which attract are not inaccessible.

An abstract statement may be misunderstood. For that reason moral maxims have seldom largely influenced the development of history. Even the Ten Commandments made far less impression on the Jewish people than did the examples of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the prophets. If a man be commanded to love his enemy, he will at once begin to ask, With what kind of love? Am I to feel toward him as I feel toward the members of my family and toward my friends? That is impossible. Then what do you mean? And how can there be two or more varieties of love? And since I am perplexed as to the meaning of the command, why should I be blamed if I do not do what is expected of me? The exhortation of Jesus, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect" is an ideal ethical precept. But who shall tell what perfection is, and what God is? And how may a limited and imperfect creature attain to the

The Inward Light

perfection of the unlimited Creator? Difficulties such as these beset the thinking man, and sometimes they seem to multiply with the use of the reasoning faculties. There was at least the appearance of justification for the remark of that Oxford professor who said: "Young gentlemen, if you ever expect to be happy you must cease to think." (Prof. William Wallace, in a class-room lecture.)

Even the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," whose meaning seems to be as evident as words can make anything, is interpreted in various ways. A writer in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1904, says that, according to prevalent impressions in the time of this utterance, a man was guilty of adultery when he had robbed another man of his wife; but Jesus taught that even the impure look was adultery. Never has there been any agreement as to the meaning of ethical or spiritual doctrines when the question has been one of interpretation alone. This divergence of interpretation is evidence enough that words are almost inevitably misunderstood. If fig-

The Ultimate Standard

ures are the worst of liars, words may well be called next to the worst. "But here is an exception—'Thou shalt not kill.' That surely is explicit." Is it? Then is war always wrong? Then, were Washington and Lincoln, Cromwell and Wellington, enemies of their race? Then, if a madman, fully armed, rushes into a crowd, shall he be allowed to shoot, while no one brings him down? Ethical precepts, even the simplest, before they have been followed far, lead into labyrinths of casuistry. If we were dependent on codes of laws either for instruction or inspiration, the moral progress of the world would have been very slight. They always require elucidation, and their interpretation has become a fine art.

An ideal, stated in words alone, may easily, in proportion to its nobility, come to be regarded as an impossibility. That exhortation of Jesus, already quoted, about being perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, rises before us like a splendid mountain, but too lofty for mortal men to scale. The Master might as well have commanded us to walk to the sun through

The Inward Light

the trackless air. If all anyone has for us in the way of teaching is the impossible, then life would be both easier and happier if such idle talk were suppressed.

Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But how is a man with vestiges of an evil heredity clinging to him to be pure in heart? It is a simple task for one to tell another that he should be pure, but what he needs to know is by what chemistry his memory may be made "like the cloudless air, and his conscience like a sea at rest."

Human ideals in themselves are tantalizing. Few men need more knowledge; but many need the transformation of their desires, the stimulation of their wills, and the inspiration of their hopes, so that they may have heart to press toward the goal whose attractions they recognize, but whose quest seems not for them. Much of the teaching concerning duty discourages, because it asks what is evidently impossible.

An abstraction, moreover, has no attractive power. The very words which, when simply

The Ultimate Standard

read, seem meaningless, when delivered with the melody of a voice and the fire of a noble personality behind them thrill like martial music. There is a suggestion of power in the "Marseillaise," or "The Watch on the Rhine" even when they are recited, but that is due to the poetical expression. Translated into prose, and read in silence, they would act like an anæsthetic; but when they are taken up and sung by a thousand soldiers, every drop of blood in our veins runs more swiftly.

An essay on courage never made anyone brave; but the story of Livingstone, without white companion, traversing Africa in order that he might help to heal "the open sore of the world," has thrilled millions of hearts, and started scores of other heroes along some like thorny path.

A treatise on ethics never transformed character; but the example of a righteous man, or of a saintly woman, has helped many another to reach an altitude where he would be ashamed to do wrong.

A sermon on philanthropy might chill the

The Inward Light

most sympathetic of audiences ; but the stories of Elizabeth Fry and John Howard, of Sister Dora and of Arnold Toynbee, have inspired thousands to carry sympathy to the prisons and loving ministries to the slums. Theologies may be written in terms of logic, and be as unattractive as blocks of ice in midwinter ; but more than one older person has felt like expressing the child's wonder at the sight of some unselfish soul doing good simply from love of it, and asking in the child's words, " Is that God? "

Inspiration requires life for its vehicle. An abstraction never made a convert or won a disciple. Truth has to be embodied to get power. " The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Words, by themselves, are mere wind. Life, example, ideals realized in flesh and blood, convince, attract, inspire, impel, and when they are lifted up, sooner or later, according to their nobility, draw men unto them.

An external standard of truth and right is a necessity, if the progress of the race along

The Ultimate Standard

ethical lines is to be either swift or sure. Each standard is the embodiment of noble ideals. It has such authority as inheres in the measure of truth and right which it contains. It discriminates between no conflicting claims; it utters no voice; but it offers truth in concrete forms, easy of interpretation. With that standard, conduct and character may be compared, and from it the actual moral condition may be learned. The ultimate standard of character for our race is the revelation of human possibilities in a person, and it ought to register the common achievement.

He who has neither external standard nor spiritual example may have noble motives and possess saintly character, but he will be as one who climbs, yet knows not that he is rising; or as one who beholds afar off a prize which, though intended for him, is forever beyond his reach.

The ultimate standard for Christians is Jesus Christ. He embodies all that they should believe of truth concerning God and man, and all that they should seek to realize in moral

The Inward Light

character. He is the standard, because in the Inward Light He is recognized as worthy of that august supremacy. In that light, in which nothing can be hidden, He meets all the requirements essential to a Master of spirits. He is not accepted as standard because of any claim which He makes for Himself. He is not imposed by any external and arbitrary power. He consents to stand in the light which shines in the human soul, and to allow His holiness to be tested in that radiance in which no taint can be concealed and no weakness hidden. He is recognized as the embodiment of the highest spiritual and ethical ideals; and thus He satisfies the profoundest longings and the most constant aspirations of the spiritual nature. The authority within affirms the authority without. Jesus is thus accepted not because of what is written in the Bible concerning Him; on the other hand, the Bible is widely accepted as Divine because His life and teachings are contained within its pages. He enters that supreme court of the soul, before which all who claim human allegiance must come,

The Ultimate Standard

and in that light of God is revealed as the Perfect One. Thus "the Life" becomes the "Light of Men." It would be easy to refuse to listen to a voice or to bow to an external authority; but no one can easily turn from Him whose credentials are certified by man's own spiritual and moral faculties.

The ultimate standard is not the Book, or the creeds, but the Man—the human life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate standard of conduct and character. What He was, all other men were intended sometime to be. The standard is the outshining of the consciousness of Jesus, a radiation of holiness, of love, of the presence of God within. He is also the ultimate standard of thought and life, or at least of all that any need to know concerning the "unseen powers." This statement does not touch the metaphysics of the person of Christ. It is unfortunate that, in the history of religions, attention has so often been diverted from questions of primary to

The Inward Light

those of secondary importance. Whatever opinions concerning the divinity of Christ may prevail, the significance of His ministry continues unchanged. By the common consent of all who know His story and His teaching, He has been awarded primacy among men because of what He was, and because of His teachings as they stood forth embodied in His life. He is the standard, because He satisfies the deepest needs of humanity ; and He is trusted, because the message that He brings is certified to be true in the court of highest appeal within the human personality. As bread satisfies the hunger of the body, so He satisfies the hunger of the soul. He convinces both the reason and the heart. Except in mere magnitude would any wish to have the Deity differ from Jesus Christ? If God be like Him, the destiny of man is secure. Nothing that is at enmity with love can overcome any human soul, if all souls are in the hands of a being who is revealed in the Man of Galilee and Calvary. Whether Jesus be Deity or not, He has the value of the Deity for us. God as the Almighty needs no other reve-

The Ultimate Standard

lation if the universe is the expression of His infinity. But is the Unseen One just and loving? Mere force may be cruel; vastness may be harsh. Is the universe in the hands of intelligence? And do nature's laws have behind them, or within them, a sympathetic personality? This is the question of questions. In Jesus, justice and love are as near perfection as human faculties can discern. "All men desire a human God." (Knapp, "Christian Theology," p. 1.) In other words, there is a widespread desire to know God, as well as to hear about Him. Those who see Jesus see the Father—not His omnipotence, not the metaphysical blending of a dual personality, but the Divine wisdom, justice, and love. He is the manifestation of the character of the Deity. If the history of Jesus is studied as a human manifestation of Divine character, it will be found to contain all that the purest and sanest souls have desired in the Deity. In Him their deepest needs and most rational longings are satisfied. He is the ultimate standard of what men need to know concerning God, because He is

The Inward Light

the expression of the fulness of God's moral attributes.

The character of Jesus is also a manifestation in condensed form of the perfect human character. "In the last analysis, and to go down to the very root of the Christian religion, to be a Christian is not to acquire a notion of God, or even an abstract doctrine of His paternal love; it is to live over, within ourselves, the inner spiritual life of Christ, and by the union of our hearts with his to *feel* in ourselves the presence of a Father, and the reality of our filial relation to Him just as Christ felt in Himself the Father's presence and His filial relation to Him." (Sabatier, "Religions of Authority," p. 293.)

Jesus realized in Himself the aspirations, the ideals, and the holiness of God, and in that realization exhibits the ultimate standard of human character. In Him is seen the perfection of the filial relation. Those who have that realization will manifest it in character like His. "What ought I to do?" That is one of the three questions which Kant said it

The Ultimate Standard

was the business of philosophy to answer. The Christian reply is simple and direct: seek to realize, as Jesus realized, a filial relation to the Deity, and your thoughts will be pure and your conduct righteous, because the Deity can be satisfied with nothing less than purity and righteousness. As all desire "a human God," or to be able to interpret the Deity in terms of humanity, so all desire to see the Perfect Man. If He may be seen He will be believed to be no myth. "We would see Jesus." The ideals of humanity have taken shape in one man at least; therefore they are known to be within the realm of possibility. The perfect human life is that of Jesus. It may be regarded as impracticable in society as now constituted, but few have ever questioned its perfection. What ought I to do? To be pure, as Jesus was pure; sympathetic, as He was when He sat by the woman of Samaria; trustful and submissive, as He was when He prayed, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt"; forgiving, as He was when He prayed, "Father, forgive them"; loving, as He was

The Inward Light

when He rejoiced in death because it enabled Him the better to serve his fellow men.

When we say that Jesus is the ultimate standard of truth concerning God, man, duty, and destiny, we mean that He teaches men all that they need to know about these subjects; that His revelations are not abstract, but concrete; not in the language of philosophy, but in terms of life. He may have been only a man—so some believe; but even then, if He was only like other men, one man has shown in Himself all that most men care to know or can know about God—yes, more than all other men combined have ever known about God. If sometime I shall look upon the Deity and find that He is like Jesus Christ, I shall be satisfied. Moreover, He realized in His daily life, and amid common duties, that He was a child of the Spirit who pervades the universe, and that He should strive to be worthy of such an ancestry. And, once more, in the midst of trials and griefs, while bearing His own heavy burdens, He has shown that one who knows himself a child of God will always

The Ultimate Standard

be pure as the light, patient, sympathetic, tolerant of men, intolerant only of sin, loving to the extreme of daily service, sacrificial to the limit of the Cross. When at last death claimed Him, it was not able to hold Him; He rose in His spiritual personality, more majestic and potent than ever before; and instead of being shut forever in a grave, has from that time to the present been the inspiration of most that has been true, beautiful, and good in the life of the world.

I cannot explain the mystery of His unique personality, if, indeed, there is any more mystery about it than in all personality. I cannot find the secret of His wondrous power, but one thing I can say with all my heart: When any other teacher comes into the Inward Light, I think about the man; I reject part and accept part of what he says; I am impressed quite as much by His limitations as by what He teaches; but when Jesus comes into the Inward Light, He makes me see what I believe to be God; He shows me my own heart in contrast with what a child of God ought to be; He

The Inward Light

makes me understand that a man may be tempted even as I am, and yet not sin; He makes me feel that all men are members of the same family; He shows me how white a human soul will become, and how loving even a man like myself will surely be, when he is one with God. Thus Jesus becomes my ultimate standard, and, from longing most to realize what have been my ambitions and my desires, I now long to be given grace to be like Him.

What does this perfect standard require of those for whom it has authority—such authority as inheres in truth and holiness? It requires that they should conform themselves to it; but here is the difficulty. “It has one meaning for one, and another meaning for another.” Yes, and no. In details it is different for different persons, while in essence it is the same for all. But let the inquiry frankly be met. Each man must be true to that standard as it is interpreted to him. That we agree with one another is not important, but that we be true to our own honest convictions is imperative. And since humanity is one even in its multitu-

The Ultimate Standard

dinous individuality, it follows that those who are true to themselves will never be very widely separated from each other either in thought or in character. The ultimate standard is Jesus Christ as each man knows Him. No one may impose his interpretation of the standard upon another. But suppose Jesus Christ does not commend Himself as worthy to be trusted—as He does not to many Hebrews; or, suppose one has lived in ignorance of Him, what then? There is but one answer: Each man must be obedient to the measure of truth that in the Inward Light is disclosed to him, and must trust that he who seeks truth and does right will not be harshly judged at the last. We may pity those from whom we differ, but it is never ours to condemn.

Will Jesus ever be surpassed? We need not inquire. Surely not in our time. The only way in which we can imagine that one could be greater than Jesus is in being a fuller revelation of the same holiness which seems in Him to have reached its utmost limit. Enough for us that he shows to humanity all that it needs

The Inward Light

to know about God, about destiny, concerning righteous conduct and the holy character. If some time in far-off ages, one should appear who should more fully disclose the glory of the Deity and the possibilities of man, it will be in the process of fulfilling the evident purpose of God as revealed in evolution, in history, and in the Christ, by which sometime the whole round world and the whole created universe shall be bound with gold chains to the throne of God. This is all that we know, and all that we need to know.

The Bibles of the World

CHAPTER NINTH

The Bibles of the World



PAUL, in writing to Timothy, said that every Scripture which is inspired of God is profitable for the development of the spiritual and ethical life. Then all writings claiming peculiar sanctity may be tested, and those which conform to this standard may be trusted, and those which do not conform to it have no claim to Divine inspiration.

The student of religion, as he pursues his investigations, finds certain grand divisions among the religions of the world, as there are grand divisions of the earth's surface; and those continental faiths contain not only records of teachers and leaders, but also holy books in which are enshrined the precepts and hymns of sages and seers. In certain respects these sacred books strangely resemble one an-

The Inward Light

other. They embody the ethical and spiritual teaching of the masters of the different religions. None of them possess logical unity, or were written with apparent attempt at literary consistency. All of them are collections of writings of various kinds—poetry, prophecy, history, and moral maxims. Each one contains the choicest literature of a nation or a religion, rather than the work of a single author; and each either claims for itself, or has had claimed for it, divine origin and divine authority. These sacred books are named the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, the Upanishads, and so on through a long list. Modern scholarship has put these writings within the reach of all who have the patience and desire to read them. Under the editorship of the late Prof. Max Müller, of Oxford University, they have been published in English in thirty large volumes. The ethnic religions were formerly little more than names to those foreign to them. Now, their missionaries are in Christian lands, as Christian missionaries are to be found among the people who adhere to the teachings of Ma-

The Bibles of the World

homet, Buddha, Confucius, or Keshub Chunder Sen. Thoughtful and inquiring persons among us find need to ask questions concerning the relative value of religions which a half century ago seldom arose.

What should be our attitude toward the world's bibles? They are as sacred in the eyes of those who were born where they hold sway as the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are to us. Do we possess any essential truth not found in them? These questions are more theoretical than practical; for, while many may press the inquiries, few will make the effort necessary to read those abstruse and difficult works, much less to study deeply enough to understand them. But a theoretical difficulty may be quite as dangerous as a practical one, and ought never to be unadvisedly or lightly turned aside. The question, therefore, as to what should be our attitude toward the world's bibles, should receive fair consideration.

Paul met the problem in his characteristically frank and lucid fashion. Any writing claiming recognition as sacred Scripture, before it

The Inward Light

should be accepted as such, must commend itself to the one studying it as calculated to inculcate truth and to promote righteousness. Whatever, when brought into the Inward Light and thoroughly and honestly examined, is found to promote goodness and loyalty to truth, may be trusted; and whatever does not is unworthy of credence. There is no authority and no sanctity in locality. What are its fruits in character? This is the test to which every claim to spiritual inspiration should be brought. The value of any religious truth may always be determined by the inevitability with which it tends to produce right conduct, and in time virtuous character. Truth and right are joined together throughout the universe, and no man can put them asunder.

So far as opportunity offers, all men should be hospitable to the various bibles, for no one of them is without some fair claim to recognition. But what men need is truth enough to live by; not enough to solve their hypothetical problems. After they have that, all other inquiries are merely speculative; and the study

The Bibles of the World

of comparative religions belongs in the same category as comparative chemistry, or comparative biology—it is interesting, but not essential. No man can studiously read the bibles and do anything else. Every man should be open-minded and willing to learn, anxious to put into life all the truth that he may discover; but as a matter of fact, most men, because of the struggle for existence, have little time to do more than read the sacred book nearest to them. If they find in that the truth which satisfies their deepest needs, they must be trusted to apply it until a clearer revelation be presented.

In these days few are blind enough to suppose that the sacred books of the non-Christian religions are altogether pernicious. The Koran teaches the unity and spirituality of God; the Buddhistic writings inculcate the service of humanity; the Zend-Avesta recognizes the struggle between good and evil, and hints at the ultimate victory of the good. Confucius taught reverence for father and mother quite as distinctly as did Moses. God has not left

The Inward Light

Himself without a witness among any people. But it is one thing to recognize that gleams of truth are found in these books, and a very different thing to admit that those by whom they are accepted have all the ethical and spiritual truth which they need. Do they send missionaries to Christian lands? If the message of those missionaries seems to have value, it ought fearlessly and gladly to be brought into the light which shines in every man's soul, and allowed to wait there until determination be made whether it actually is the truth required for hours of intellectual struggle and spiritual confusion; whether it will make duty clearer and the ethical resolution stronger. If it will help any to conform their conduct to what they know to be the everlasting principles of morality; if it will make it easier for any to live more consistently, and to die without dread, it should be received, whatever the land from which it comes or the name of the author who gave it utterance. Do we send missionaries to other lands? They should be received in the same spirit. To a Buddhist,

The Bibles of the World

the distinctive Christian teaching ought not to be expected instantly to present itself as presumptively true; and any distinguishing doctrine of the Buddhists should be thoroughly tested before its acceptance by a Christian. It would be a valuable exercise for anyone to take the salient teachings of the world's Bibles, and, bringing them into the light that lighteth every man, to inquire which are true and which are false; but no one man can do that for another. As I thus, for myself, treat some of the teachings of the Koran, of the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta, I turn away from them with unutterable repulsion; but when other teachings of the same books are brought into the Inner Light, the judgment could scarcely seem more favorable had they been spoken by Jesus Himself. Hospitality to the doctrines of the ethnic religions is in itself no virtue, and recognition of their worth when proven is no evidence of disloyalty to Christianity. Truth is one, and Divine, whatever the name of the teacher who gives it currency or the land whence it comes.

The Inward Light

In the presence of what is clearly the true method, let some of the distinctive messages of the ethnic bibles and of the Christian Bible be tested by their appearance in the inner light, and by their results in character.

The Buddhists teach that behind all beings and events, older even than Amida Buddha himself, and, indeed, his creator, is the eternal law of causation. Every event and every being may be traced back to that voiceless, purposeless, remorseless, everlasting law. Causation is indeed an eternal law; of that there can be no doubt; but does that fact adequately explain the universe and history? In the absence of other evidence, let this teaching be brought into the Inward Light. In that silence in which the soul is absolutely alone, let certain questions be put and pressed. Is it conceivable that a reasonable being, a person possessing powers of thought, affection, volition, is the child of a blind and unintelligent process, as aimless as the winds, as unfeeling as the ocean waves? Such an assertion, though found in all the bibles of the world, would be unworthy

The Bibles of the World

of belief. This doctrine must be rejected, because it contradicts the intuitions.

In the Koran are found such sentences as the following: "Thus doth God cause to err whom He pleaseth, and he directeth whom He pleaseth." Again, "Gabriel descends with the Lord's decrees concerning every matter." Again, "The fate of every man have we bound round his neck." ("Islam and its Founders," Stobart, p. 96.) Thus is the doctrine clearly taught that "God's absolute predestinating decree" extends to all the minute affairs of life. Is arbitrary predestination true? When facts of one class alone are studied, it is difficult to answer the arguments which may be presented in its favor. If it were solely a matter of logic, the balance might incline now one way, and again another. But let that doctrine of pure fatalism be brought into the silence of the soul, and let the man on whom it is urged be asked, "Do you honestly believe that every event of your life is determined for you by a power outside yourself, without the slightest reference to any choice

The Inward Light

by you?" Few would be able to make that monstrous confession without moral as well as intellectual stultification. It was not attested by the Inward Light even with Mahomet, for elsewhere he denied the doctrine.

From one of the sacred books of India I quote the following: " To a man contaminated by sensuality, neither the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor observances, nor pious austerities, will procure felicity. A wise man must faithfully discharge all his moral duties, even though he does not constantly perform the ceremonies of religion. He will fall very low if he perform ceremonial acts only and fail to discharge his moral duties. There are two roads which conduct to perfect virtue: to be true, and to do no evil to any creature." (" Sacred Anthology," Conway, pp. 3, 4.)

The ethical value of this teaching is instantly obvious. It is worthy to be in any bible. The clearer the light, the more like Divine revelation it appears.

Here is a quotation from the scriptures of the Buddhists in China, which sounds strangely

The Bibles of the World

like the teaching of Jesus. Buddha said: "A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me; the fragrance of these good actions always redounding to me, the harm of the slanderer's words returning to him." ("Sacred Anthology," Conway, p. 240.) Such sentiments sound like echoes of the Sermon on the Mount.

The value of any scriptures is not in what they claim for themselves, but in the measure of their correspondence with those everlasting truths of religion, and principles of conduct, which are written in the constitution of man, and which are easily discernible in the Inward Light.

There is no authority in the assumption which a document makes for itself. The Bible commands our allegiance solely because its claims are certified by the ultimate authority, which is God in the soul of man. The authority of mere assumption is recognized only by those who do not think. Thoughtful persons will

The Inward Light

press their inquiries back of the text, and search for some basis for faith which is more enduring than verbal assertion. The Christian should not be afraid to subject to this test even the Book which he believes to be the holiest of all books; because there can be no war between truths. What is written without, if it is a Divine revelation, must harmonize with what is written within. This was the teaching of Luther and of Calvin. Calvin insisted that every man could come into the immediate presence of God and receive light direct from Him; and Luther applied this test so rigorously as to refuse to accept the Epistle of James as canonical. The Inward Light is no new discovery. It has been recognized in all the Christian centuries as the Indwelling Spirit of God.

I will now apply this principle to the only one of the world's bibles of which it is possible for most of Occidentals intelligently to speak. What shall be our attitude toward the Book which we call the Word of God, and around which are twined the dearest of our memories

The Bibles of the World

and the most enduring of our hopes? It must be confessed, though with unspeakable sadness, that with many it seems to be losing its power, even becoming less than other books, not because it has been thoroughly studied, but because it is being silently and without reluctance ignored. One reason for this fact is not far for us to find. Claims have been made for the Bible which it does not make for itself. The variety of its literature, impressive though it be, has been overlooked. All its parts have been regarded as equally valuable for all climes and for all ages. Its essential nature has been singularly and inexcusably obscured. Let us approach it, adopting another method. We will simply bring its ruling ideas into the Inward Light. Will they endure the test? If the truths which it enshrines correspond with the deepest necessities of our moral and spiritual natures, and, so far as we know, of the common human nature, we may be sure that it is the Word of God, and the Bible of bibles. A frame is not a picture; a house is not the man who dwells within it; and the real Bible is not

The Inward Light

its literary form, but the ethical and spiritual truths which have given it its place at the head of the world's literature. The way to test the value of the Book is first to discover its ruling ideas, then to bring these into the Inward Light.

What are those ruling ideas? The most prominent is its doctrine of God. How is that subject treated in our Bible? God is represented as a Person, as the Cause of all things, as Providence, as Ruler, and finally as Father. That implies, of course, that the universe, with all its vastness and complexity, is administered by Personality; that history has been developed according to a good plan; and that this perfect Personality can be understood only as He is interpreted in the terms of Fatherhood.

The second distinguishing idea in the Bible is its teaching concerning deliverance from suffering and from all causes of suffering. It teaches that evil and suffering are temporary and disciplinary; that they are slowly but surely passing away, and that finally, no one can tell how many millenniums hence, they will

The Bibles of the World

cease to be. The agent of this deliverance is Jesus Christ, a man like ourselves as to His nature, but One who, in His ethical being, was identical with God, as He would help all men sometime to become.

The third truth which distinguishes the Bible concerns the being who is the subject of deliverance, viz., man. His nature is that of a spirit partaking of the very Being of the Deity; he is in the image of God. When we look on a perfect man, we come as near as is possible to seeing God. The child inherits the very nature of the parent, yet is an entirely different individuality; so man has his nature from and in likeness to God, yet has an individuality of his own. This child of the Perfect One will realize his high destiny only as he is conformed to the will of his Father. When he is thus conformed, he will be in harmony with his fellow men, because all those who are at one with God must be in loving relations with each other.

Thus, in the fourth place, we are brought to the supreme law of life—Love. Those who love

The Inward Light

are in harmony with God, and are just, faithful, pure, true, right, in all their relations to one another. Love is the fulfilling of the law ; because God is Love, and the law is God's will.

The fifth distinguishing truth of the Bible is the Kingdom of God. This doctrine teaches that the ideal life for individuals, and for the race, is seen in Jesus Christ ; and that when evolution shall have finished its task, the whole human family having reached His stature, shall live together on the earth, as well as beyond, in concord and blessedness, and that God shall dwell among His people.

This leads, of course, and finally, to the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul—that no child of God can really die ; that spirit, being of the same nature as God, is as indestructible as God Himself ; that man is a spirit, and therefore partakes of the immortality of God, who is a Spirit.

I ask myself, as other thoughtful people who have been brought up on the Christian's Bible must sometime do, Why should I revere this

The Bibles of the World

Book as God's Word? I cannot interpret its teachings as many seem to do. I cannot think of all as miracles which once were called miraculous, nor of all as literal history which was formerly so regarded. Shall I therefore surrender my early faith, and launch out into cheerless agnosticism? Just here great care and large charity should be exercised. No system of thought has long commanded the allegiance of many people, because of the error it has contained. Books and institutions live because of the truth in them. Let us bring these six ruling ideas of our Bible into the Inward Light, and there study them. God as Person, Cause, Providence, Father: There is a way of deliverance for man from every kind of evil and from every form of suffering: Men are God's children, and brothers one of another: Love is the law of life: The Kingdom of God is the goal of history: Immortality is the soul's final destiny.

These doctrines come in silent procession before us and wait for their judgment. With all prejudice put aside, we ask ourselves, Are

The Inward Light

they true? What shall the answer be? No one can reply for another; but I believe that no man ever held one of them to be false, who did not first have to persuade himself of their falsity. When we ask, "What truths do we need to live by, and to complete our being?" no one, unless compelled to do so, can accept less than these six doctrines of Jesus. When I endeavor to balance arguments I become confused; but when I ask what must be true, if human existence is to be saved from awful mockery, and the creation of man from being regarded as a monumental crime, I see that the ruling ideas of the Bible must be true. Because the Bible satisfactorily answers the profoundest questions which the soul of man ever asks, it shows itself as the Word of God, and has all the force and value which belong to Divine inspiration.

In the presence of such truths, inquiries as to whether the first chapter of Genesis is to be interpreted literally or allegorically, or whether Jonah is an historical or a parabolical writing, or whether John wrote the fourth Gospel,

The Bibles of the World

seem foolish and puerile. In the Bible we are brought face to face with God, with deliverance, with love, with the goal of humanity, with life beyond the grave. The land above which such mountains rise is holy, however full of thickets and hard to penetrate its lower levels may be.

The light within the soul reveals the ineffable glory and the abiding reality of the distinguishing teachings of the Christian's Bible. No one need hesitate to affirm that he trusts the Bible because these truths shine from its pages; but the truths themselves have a foundation firmer than their presence in any sacred book—even their correspondence with the requirements of the reason and the moral sense.

But the question may be raised, Are not those truths contained also in the ethnic bibles? Some of them are, but, so far as I know, deliverance of individuals and of the race from sin, and all desire to sin, is promised nowhere else. But even if this were not true, this fact should trouble no one. So far as

The Inward Light

such spiritual messages are found in the bibles of the world, they should be recognized; and if they were to be found in all of them it would be an occasion for rejoicing. It would not show that the Christian Scriptures are false, but rather that the truth which humanity needs has reached further than most of us, in our provincialism, had supposed. Loyalty to the revelation in Jesus Christ does not require disloyalty to the truth as taught by any other master. Truth is truth, by whomever taught and wherever uttered. Everywhere there is light enough to live by. The marvel is not that so few have light, but that so few use the light which they have. The test of a doctrine is not, Who was the teacher by whom it was uttered? but, rather, does it tend toward the realization of those moral ideals which are written in the nature of man? No teaching should be accepted which, when followed to its natural conclusion, results in the making of bad men. All doctrines may be received whose logical tendency is toward the promotion of those ideals of virtue which have the consensus of the

The Bibles of the World

world's best sentiment behind them. The fatalism of Mahomet is thus ruled out, because, if the door of hope be closed, men will say that they but do as fate determines, and that they have no choice. The Christian doctrine of deliverance is approved because it opens the door to hope by showing the Eternal Goodness, and the universe itself, on the side of those who are trying to rise; and even more, because it shows how the very desire for release in itself will be stimulated. And the Person of Jesus is glorified because He is recognized as the eternal goal of humanity, and the expression in time of all that any need to know concerning God.

After all allowances have been made for the "broken lights" which are to be found in the bibles of the world, the more impressively true becomes the testimony of Whittier, the laureate of the Inward Light:

*"I gathered up the scattered rays
Of wisdom in the early days,
Faint gleams and broken, like the light
Of meteors in a northern night,*

The Inward Light

*Betraying to the darkling earth
The unseen sun which gave them birth;
I listen to the Sibyls' chant,
The voice of priest and hierophant;
I know what Indian Kreeshna saith,
And what of life and what of death
The demon taught to Socrates;
And what, beneath his garden trees
Slow-pacing, with a dream-like tread,
The solemn-thoughted Plato said;
Nor lack I tokens, great or small,
Of God's clear light in each and all,
While holding with more dear regard
The scroll of Hebrew seer and bard,
The starry pages promise-lit
With Christ's Evangel over-writ,
Thy miracle of life and death,
O Holy One of Nazareth."*—

QUESTIONS OF LIFE.

The Creeds

CHAPTER TENTH

The Creeds



IN the beginning, Christianity was one man. Historically it dates from Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian Church believes that, in a unique way, the Divine life was in that Man. The Church is a growth, and not a mechanism. At the beginning it had only the leadership of the Spirit—no constitution, no by-laws, no definite plan of operation, and no indication of future greatness. As in the natural world a germ develops through varying cycles of existence, so the spiritual life in Jesus has grown into humanity, until there is to-day the Church visible and invisible, and until the kingdom of God seems to be no more a dream, but a vivid and ever-extending reality. Its spirituality among the Hebrews, its intellectual and ethical forms among the Greeks, and its more

The Inward Light

practical manifestations among Occidental peoples, are to be attributed to the adjustment of life to environment.

The human mind discovers facts and seeks their explanation. The way in which men explain what they see or know is called theory. The creeds of Christendom are crystallized theories concerning Christ and the Christian revelation. It was inevitable that a man who, being dead, retained such power, should be the subject of speculation. This tendency was manifest when Jesus was alive in the flesh; for Peter told Him that men were questioning who He was. The Master, without answering, asked Peter for his opinion, eliciting the reply, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." After His death there was recognition of the historicity of Jesus and of the vitality of His words. Men believed in Him. If they were Jews, they would add with the emphasis which only a Jew could give, "I believe in Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God." If they were Gentiles, without the Messianic expectation, their creed was simply belief in

The Creeds

Jesus and in His message concerning God and man. Theories in regard to the new Teacher, and attempts to adjust His words to current philosophy, quickly multiplied.

The next step was to make acceptance of the theories as imperative as recognition of the life. The Teacher had associated His own name with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and disciples had been received into His fellowship on declaring their belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It was then asked, How can these names be classed together without an implication of equality and unity? And then, How can the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be different beings and yet One? Thus almost in a day speculations pushed themselves into the little community and usurped the chief place. Emphasis had been upon a Person, and the moral life inspired by Him; but the Person was soon obscured by efforts to explain His being.

Creeds are formulated theories concerning Divine facts. In the early time Jesus was the

The Inward Light

supreme reality, and men confessed faith in Him; but with the attempt to adjust His Person and teachings to other facts, simple confession was exchanged for complicated formulas of belief. The earliest creeds were confessions—acknowledgments of loyalty to Christ, and of belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then slight additions of theory were made, as in the Apostles' Creed, which is the oldest, the most nearly ecumenical and generally acceptable epitome of Christian faith. It is purely confessional, the voice of devout spirits, an outburst of the common Christian experience. Gladness, hope, victory, thrill through it, until the great and growing music culminates in the life everlasting. When speculation was fully started, the Apostles' Creed was enlarged, not only with the acknowledgment of Jesus as the fountain of spiritual life, but with attempts to explain God, to show how three personalities inhere in the Divine nature, and how the work of salvation is accomplished. Later, the process was still further complicated, and the Nicene Creed

The Creeds

was followed in succession by those of Chalcedon, of Athanasius, and many others. Thus the early confession of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit gave place to speculations on the Trinity and on the universe, until at last the Westminster Confession was fashioned, which may be regarded as the culmination of an effort to adjust and put into creedal form the contents of the Christian revelation. The early creeds were confessions; the later, whole bodies of divinity. Only when the confession is thus crowded out by speculation, when truth is made of less importance than theories concerning it, is there occasion for criticism and revolt.

In studying these documents, it must be remembered that inquiries concerning the eternal mysteries are inevitable and desirable. Speculation is the pioneer of progress. There has been no more of it in theology than in other sciences. Moreover, the universe is a unit, so that theories in one sphere of thought influence thinking in all spheres. The creeds represent not only the thought of the Church,

The Inward Light

but equally the thinking of the times in which they were composed. The doctrine of Evolution is a recent product ; there is no more of it in ancient astronomy than in ancient theology. If many of the creeds are outgrown, it is because there has been progress in everything else as well as in theology. They are no farther behind the nineteenth century than is the geology and biology of a century ago. The sciences go hand in hand ; advance in one makes possible advance in all. Only when statements of doctrine are used as barriers to prevent children of the Light from entering into their heritage do we ask, What men wrote these creeds ? Why should they be considered infallible ? With something of impatience we turn to our Bible, and ask what confessions it contains ; and there find that each individual made his own confession ; that no one was exactly like another ; and that each was suffused with the personality of the confessor. Every individual who knows Christ as his Saviour has a unique experience ; and unique experience requires original expression. Nathanael

The Creeds

said, " Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God ; Thou art the King of Israel." Simon Peter said, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thomas answered, " My Lord and my God." The eunuch said, " I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And the baptismal formula is, " Into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." No two are alike. The Divine life in nature has an infinitely diversified expression ; so has the Divine life in humanity.

Creeds are mechanisms built around the growing and expanding Life of Christ. Those who make them may have much of that life, and may have but little. Those who have the most of it are the least likely to attempt its definition and limitation. Those who have been conscious of the Divine Presence have striven to be plastic in the unseen hands, rather than to explore horizons which have opened before their vision like a northern midnight thick with stars. Life is always a wonder. It eludes definition and analysis, and grows according to its own laws. While scholars were beating out

The Inward Light

the articles of the Confession of Chalcedon, all through the world, in serene unconsciousness, humble spirits were following the Spirit of Truth in the realization of Fatherhood and Brotherhood. While the Reformed divines, by every device known to logic, were packing words with sovereignty, reprobation, and expiation, millions who never heard of a logical process were yielding to Jesus, and learning at first-hand that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The stars move in their courses, whether the astronomy is Ptolemaic or Copernican; heather and furze embroider Scotch hills in blessed oblivion of all that has been written about the origin of species; and men are born, live, work, think, write, perform heroic acts, make literature, and die, without the slightest acquaintance with the theories which distinguish one school of medicine from another. Life can never be expressed in terms of mechanism. There is something in the heavens which eludes logic. Poetry and music can come nearer than mathematics to describing a tree with its unseen chemistries, its silent

The Creeds

but ever-active forces, as it rises from a seed, meets the sunlight, and measures its strength with storms. Creeds have been inevitable, because Christianity rests upon facts and truths which are known to be such as the result of intellectual processes. Those who most decry reason trust to its conclusions. Revelations are always made through our mental faculties. The Light is within. The Almighty chooses to stand before the judgment-seat of man. Creeds bear witness to the greatness of man; they show that he dares to go everywhere with the torch of his own thought. Instead of showing intellectual bondage, they bear witness that in all ages Christians have thought for themselves, even when they have not been willing for others to do so. As generation after generation has put its ideas of God, Christ, and the spiritual universe into written form, it has simply registered the results of its investigations. But coincident with the process, unseen as the spirit in man, or the breath of the south wind in the springtime, something has transpired which in a very little

The Inward Light

while has emptied those fine phrases of their meaning, and brought in other and usually more satisfying ideas which require new expression. Physical life never rests. Slowly but unceasingly it thrills and throbs in gardens and orchards, in meadows and forests, in summer and winter, in day and night; and the Divine life which was in Christ never rests, but is ever winning its way into individual hearts, transforming institutions, revolutionizing States, bringing in the day of love. New life is the superlative fact in the movement in humanity which began with Jesus Christ. Old institutions have fallen; ancient theories of ethics have dropped out of sight; hoary superstitions have disappeared, at the very time that speculations concerning Christ were most confused with Christ Himself. As some lofty spirit hears those of smaller stature trying to account for his greatness, and smiles as he rises to grander tasks, so, undisturbed by puny speculations, the Spirit of Truth moves along His shining pathway, continuing revelations, working miracles, and by never-

The Creeds

ceasing sacrifice releasing the groaning creation. Even when God has been represented as cruel and heartless, men have had revelations in secret which have filled their dull hearts with hope, their barren lives with service, and lifted their thoughts "to take in heights beyond the stars." In other words, the life has been more than the mechanism. Creeds are essential to our fallible thinking, but the Spirit has never yet been imprisoned in a creed.

The New Testament always presents the Christ in terms of life; His teachings thrill with life; He was incarnate; He came into a living man; The Life was the light of men; He taught by words; inspired by influence; moved upon society by what He was. One of His greatest utterances concerning Himself was, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He represented the process by which others were to become like Him as a birth from above. He left no rules, wrote no book, made no laws. framed no gov-

The Inward Light

ernment; said that what He came to achieve would be like a mustard-seed. His lessons were taught in terms of life. God is the "Father"; prayer is the intercourse of spirits; "Pentecost" was a new and unexpected manifestation of spiritual energy. He never touched a higher note than when he said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." The state from which He came to save men was death; that to which He saves them is life.

While men will always attempt to harmonize facts and truths, there will always be facts and truths which defy adjustment and harmony. An eagle and a lily can never be adjusted; a meadow lark and a hippopotamus can never be harmonized; all that can be said is that both live—their harmony is in unseen spheres. Creeds have never told much of what Christ has been to the world; they have been filled with speculations about Him rather than with Him. He is life manifesting itself in righteousness. What he requires for expression is not logic, but holy character. Men have tried to tell how the Infinite subsists; how the

The Creeds

Unfathomable works; what will be in the eternities; while He has been saving individual sinners, creating finer conditions in society, introducing new ethical standards, bringing in hope, and putting in the place of cruel hate and sordid greed the love of God and man. The essential things of Christ have never been written in doctrinal formulæ. The Apostle said, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." The world waits for a creed in which one article shall be, "I believe in the brotherhood of man." In that is more of Christ than could be packed in a thousand pages about "the Eternal Generation." The Church will always have a creed, for while men live they must think, and while they think they will have creeds. But gradually enigmatic utterances concerning fathomless mysteries will be replaced by some such words as these: "We believe that the pure in heart shall see God; that 'Whosoever loveth is born of God and knoweth God'; that Jesus Christ reveals in humanity all we need to know of God and of

The Inward Light

the possibilities of man; that He saves from sin all who follow Him; that love of the brethren is the test of discipleship. We believe in the continuous leadership of the Spirit of Truth; that all things are in God's hands, and never can escape from Him. We believe in the brotherhood of man; the communion of saints; that 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'; and in the life everlasting." Along some such lines the creed of the future will be written. It will come fresh and throbbing from experience of truth as it is revealed in the Inward Light. The Divine life in humanity can neither be expressed nor imprisoned in any form of words, and the Spirit's work, like the elemental forces, goes on untouched and undisturbed by human speculation.

The progress of Christianity, or the growth of Christ into the life of the world, cannot be learned from doctrinal confessions. They seem to have moved in a circle. At first they were simple and heartfelt expressions of personal trust in the Master, and the utterance of faith

The Creeds

in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Later there grew around these central truths a body of doctrine. The simplicity of the Apostles' Creed gave place to the slight complexity of the Nicene Creed, and that to the greater complexity of the Creed of Chalcedon, and so on, until the childlike confessions of earlier times entirely disappeared from the Church. The tendency toward creedal elaboration culminated in the Westminster Assembly. Since then there has been a reverse movement toward simplicity, toward acceptance of the Apostles' Creed as sufficient for confessional purposes. Compare the Apostles' Creed with that of the National Congregational Council. Does the comparison give any clear idea of the growth of Christianity? Is not this the conclusion?—after two thousand years of strife the Church is slowly getting back to its starting-point. How many think the Council's Creed preferable to the Apostles'? Does the Council's Creed have anything more satisfying concerning the Divine existence than "I believe in God, the Father Almighty"? Does

The Inward Light

it shed one ray of light on the Person of our Lord? There is the music of anthems and the swell of great organs in the following from the oldest of creeds: "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting." The creeds of the world tell nothing of the growth of Christ as a vital power into human thought and character. They have the same relation to Him as churches, cathedrals, and liturgies. Cathedrals show that men in different times have had varying ideas of what buildings best honored their Master; and liturgies show how people have chosen to express their worship. But liturgies and architecture cannot tell how that Man of Galilee has become the Master-thought of all our thinking and the Master-light of all our seeing. The growth of the Christ-life in the world must be sought among the people, where He still goes about doing good, binding up broken hearts, opening blind eyes, casting out devils, and preaching a new day to the poor.

The Creeds

But interrogate society, institutions, and the life of man. Leave the fact that the Gospel has been proclaimed in all ages and lands; forget, for the time, temples and cathedrals, music, choirs, priests, preachers; simply consider human life as it may be studied in customs and institutions: do they speak any more distinctly than doctrinal confessions concerning what Christ is and has done? Wherever He has been preached, at once and of necessity the life of love has begun. Its growth has been slow, for its environment has been unfavorable. What crimes were once enacted in the name of justice and law! What wretches polluted the splendor of the Cæsarean throne! A philosophy of despair had taken the place of religion. Augustus, having failed to revive the old State religion, had resorted to magicians and soothsayers from Egypt and the East; those who claimed respectability put little children on the street to die. On an island in the Tiber the aged were often left, like worn-out horses. Imagine a world without hospitals, asylums, children's homes, fresh-air

The Inward Light

funds! Think of tens of thousands of people gathering to see men kill one another! Remember that that was done in the heart of the most splendid and in many respects the best nation which the world had ever known; and that it was not exceptional, but that what the capital was the provinces were. Remember that slavery existed in well-nigh every land; that woman was degraded; that fathers had the power of life and death over their children; that divorce was almost as common as marriage; and that sensuality was exalted to worship. In that dark and awful degradation were many bright spots. Man is not and never has been wholly bad. Serene and beautiful spirits have never been entirely unknown. Marcus Aurelius sat upon the same throne as Nero and Caligula; Cornelia walked the streets of the same city as Agrippina; nevertheless cruelty held the sceptre, love had little honor, and humanity did not seem to be moving toward better things.

That young Nazarene lived and died. The words which He spoke were treasured and re-

The Creeds

peated, and the subtle something which we call life—for it had the power of reproducing itself—began to germinate and to extend. Wherever that life went, society was changed. Gladiatorial exhibitions were given up in response to an appeal in the name of Christ; asylums were built, because He took little children in His arms; the poor, often not wisely, were cared for, because they were of the humanity into which He had come; hospitals were built, because it was His mission to heal diseases, and almost always in connection with churches. The dialogues of Plato stimulate speculation; the influence of Jesus bears fruit in holy character. Other masters have had a few disciples, but where the message of Jesus has gone, the church, the school, the hospital, the asylum, those great sources of moral regeneration, are found side by side. They belong together, and are the efflorescence of a common life. He taught the brotherhood of man. To teach it, and to realize it, are different things, but brotherhood grows from Him as a tree from a seed; and the very rabble

The Inward Light

that is ready to sack the churches will cheer His Name to the echo. No real democracy was ever known before Jesus washed His disciples' feet, and taught the world that he who would be chief should be the servant of all. Laws formerly were made for kings; now they are made for men. Little children are embraced in the protection of the State; woman is the equal of man; competition is giving place to cooperation; duelling is a disgrace, except in France and Germany, and there it is a farce; slavery is nearly gone, for to buy and sell a man is to make merchandise of a son of God; and while the armaments of the world are greater than ever, each nation dreads to assume the responsibility of precipitating conflict. These changes are symptomatic of others more striking. Churches, charities, schools, are as nothing when balanced against hope, joy, love, and the consciousness of a meaning and a chance in life.

The saddest fact of the old time was its hopelessness. Cruelty in conduct is the expression of despair in philosophy. Show men that they

The Creeds

are in an infinite dungeon whose only escape is by death, and the wail of the Buddhist will everywhere be heard, "And life is woe!" Epictetus and Aurelius faced the solemn mysteries with heroic spirits, but they had no power to bind up broken hearts; and while their teachings may have nerved a few to endurance, they inspired no enthusiasm, and opened no new and larger horizons.

Need the other side of this picture be sketched? Can the living Christ be found in society and history? Is He not saving men to-day? Who is that preacher thrilling thousands with his message? One who formerly was a drunkard. Who is that missionary leading in the transformation of a State? One who was once a waif in an almshouse. Who is that woman choosing to go among the vilest human wrecks, teaching them, praying with them, feeding them, in peril for them, to save them? One who learned her lesson from Him who died for harlots and thieves. Hallucinations inspire no such enthusiasms. Who shall explain the marvel? Why does it need to be explained?

The Inward Light

Shall we try to analyze the south wind before we breathe the fragrance of the spring-time or listen to the singing of the birds? Motherhood, with its heart of love and arms of steel, needs no explanation. The spiritual leadership of the world is a fact; that is all that we need to know.

The creeds tell us what fallible men have thought about Jesus the Christ. They are worthy of study. They are honest attempts to answer ever-recurring questions. All men have creeds. They exist in the history of the Church like milestones on a pathway which has been traversed; they are invaluable as testimonies; but it is criminal to use them as standards for all time. Wisdom was not born yesterday, and will not die to-morrow. Nothing infallible can be taught through fallible speech. Progress depends on union with some one who never ceases to grow, or with some one who can be forever approached but never reached. The Life is eternally progressive; it is never one day simply what it was the day before. The thoughts of men about it must

The Creeds

change with its growth; that which is true of it to-day may be inadequate to-morrow. Death alone never changes. The creeds are the results of the honest efforts of earnest men to express their thought on eternal mysteries. The work of earnest and good men always contains some lesson worth studying. Those symbols have holy memories twined around them. They have grown into the thought of the Church, been chanted in its liturgies, taught to childhood, studied by manhood, and held aloft like banners in front of the advancing Christian host; but they give very little idea of Christ. He must be found—as He always was found when He was in the flesh—in the midst of the want and woe, the vice and crime, the sickness and misery, the desolation and death of humanity, comforting the sorrowing, blessing the children, healing the sick, saving the sinning, preaching the Gospel to the poor, and telling all men of the Father's house and the Father's love. The Spirit that lighteth every man is the source and fountain of spiritual life, there-

The Inward Light

fore the essential thing is to get in touch with Him. As one torch lights another without itself being dimmed, so He lights the minds and thrills the hearts of all who will to do His will. It is not necessary to know truth in order to be right. That would be imperative if Christianity were a mechanism. He who would make a watch must know all about watches; but He who would be a Christian must trust the Inward Light. If we manufacture our Christianity, then perfect rules are essential; but the life of God in the soul grows according to its own nature, and the essential thing is not what we know, but whether the hindrances to the growth of that life have been removed. If one born blind were to inquire about the stars, would he be offered an astronomy? His eyes must be opened before the constellations and the upper deeps will have any meaning for him. Such a desire to be right as turns from evil, and reaches toward holiness, must precede knowledge of holy things. That desire is met by the Divine love, and from that union, with no greater mystery than always sur-

The Creeds

rounds the beginning of life, holiness is produced. The process has been going on for centuries. Many have vainly imagined that they were spiritual because they accepted the Confession; and many have refused the Confession, and proved by indisputable evidence that they had the life. This shows what the Church really is—the society of those who obey the Inward Light, or who are possessed by the Divine life.

Life must manifest itself. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Wherever there is growth in likeness to the historic Christ there is the Christ-life, whatever the philosophy of the Master or the universe; and wherever that growth is absent the Christ-life is lacking, even though there be Confession, prayer, baptismal font, bread, and wine-crowned communion table, hymns, and sacred liturgies.

*“To do Thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds;
And simple trust can find Thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.*

The Inward Light

*"Our Friend, Our Brother, and Our Lord,
What may Thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee."*

The Inward Light reveals God:

It makes more vivid the eternal evangel—the message of hope to those who suffer; of salvation to those who sin; and of immortal life to those who face the mystery of death:

It illuminates the essential meaning of the Cross:

It shows that the mission of the individual Christian, and of the Church, is to continue Christ's work of personal salvation and of social redemption:

This light, beginning with conscious life, is continued through many experiences, and will grow fuller and brighter so long as man is spiritually receptive:

It is dimly shadowed in the creeds of Christendom; is clearer in the theology of the people; still clearer in the amelioration of society; and it is slowly but surely working toward

The Creeds

its perfect expression in the spiritual development of the world:

It makes possible the perfect revelation of God to man, and of man to himself.

*“ A sweeter song shall then be heard—
The music of the world’s accord,
Confessing Christ the Inward Word.*

*“ That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One faith, one hope, one love restore
The seamless robe which Jesus wore.”*

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision



WE are in the midst of a spiritual movement, which in some respects is like the evangelical revival under the Wesleys and the Great Awakening in New England. The study of such eras in spiritual history is always instructive, whether we approach them as historians, psychologists, or as mystics. They might be regarded as natural phenomena, or as manifestations of supernatural power; but such inquiries into causes would be foreign to the purpose of this chapter. However they may be accounted for, they are mighty and beneficent facts in the evolution of our race. They are like tides that reach a higher level every time they flow. They distinguish no one nation and no one religion. They have been as marked features in the growth of Buddhism and of Mahometanism

The Inward Light

as of Christianity; they are akin to the Revival of Learning in the Middle Ages, and to the new sense of nationality in the last years of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth centuries. Every force is liable to abuse, the enormity of which is usually a fair index of the benefits which would have followed in its train if it had been properly used.

No greater blessing could be granted to any people than such a revealing of spiritual realities as would enable them to be as sure of the unseen as they are of the seen, and would make it easier for them to respond to the highest motives, even in the midst of pollution and weakness, than to yield to the fascinations of folly and the allurements of the senses. The ability to realize God, and to live according to one's own consciousness of what truth and right require, is the richest endowment which can be conferred on any people. Such an awakening ought not to be an occasion for extravagant and insane nervous disturbances. It should rather be a time for clear vision, sane thought, lofty ideals, and a sensible and

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

sincere devotion to what is best for the individual and for society. In reality it is a new appreciation of the light within; it leads to a willingness to see all objects as that reveals them. Of revivals which are distinguished by doleful faces, drivelling sentimentality, and religious cant, the world has had too many; but for those which would result in intellectual illumination, moral earnestness, devotion to truth and right, and an appreciation of the common humanity, all wise souls will unceasingly pray.

The characteristics of the spiritual movements of our time are chiefly ethical. Drunkards are ceasing to drink; gamblers are becoming honest; those who have caused loss to others are making restitution; the saloons are emptying as the churches are filling. Tested by their fruit, these movements are from God. Will the wave touch our eminently respectable modern life with a fine enthusiasm which shall make men eager to trust God, be good, and live in right relations with their fellow-men? No one knows much about the wind, and none

The Inward Light

know much about the ebb and flow of the spiritual tides. Among the things which are distinctly visible, however, are a few of the hindrances to any deep work of grace in our time. In substance these have been the same in all ages, because human tendencies are constant. What most obstructs spiritual vision? What prevents the Inward Light from filling the souls of men with its radiance?

The consciousness of being out of harmony with truth and right always has this effect. A deep and rich experience must be preceded by the banishment from thought and conduct of every evil and of every doubtful thing. This is an imperative condition. It should ante-date all inquiry as to necessary beliefs. If one would know whether he must have any creed, he must begin by living according to the light which he already has. By "evil things," merely great moral transgressions are not implied. "Little foxes spoil the vines," and small sins with their unseen hands will surely retard the upward movement of the soul. There can be no peace in the heart of one who has grown

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

rich at the expense of the welfare of another, and there ought to be none until he has restored what he has unjustly gained. He who gets his pleasure at the risk of the moral deterioration of a human soul, however obscure or frail, may be as wise as Dr. Faust, but sooner or later he will find himself as vile as Mephistopheles. Satisfaction in the moral ruin of a soul is a state of mental and moral midnight, something to be dreaded more than physical suffering and spiritual chastisement. Willingness to seek individual gratification at such a cost reveals an ethical nature out of which only vice and crime can grow.

“It is nobody’s business what I do, so long as I keep my conduct to myself. I do not mean to harm anyone, and I have no desire to shock anyone, but my private life is my own, and I shall do as I please.” Yes, and the world may never discover what that man does; nevertheless there is a terrible fallacy in his argument, because he who knows himself wrong, and who is unwilling to put himself right, even if no human eye ever detects his misdeeds, hinders

The Inward Light

his own growth in spiritual directions. He is not cultivating righteousness for the right's sake; he is repudiating essential morality, and insisting that that only is evil which brings the world's maledictions. But goodness is not conditioned on an audience, and he who is vile within will not long be pure without. Spiritual growth signifies simply increase in ability to discern what is right, and willingness to act accordingly. Every one of the cardinal sins is essentially evil; its quality does not depend on its publicity; and every one of the cardinal virtues is essentially good, whether it stand forth in the glare of the world or be unseen by human eyes. He who cherishes a vile thought, or revels in a lascivious suggestion, is obstructing his own progress, and in so doing is using the influence of his personality to retard the moral advancement of the community. Would one help to promote a spiritual awakening? The first thing for him to do, without regard to his creed or to his position, is to put away everything that is wrong, and so far as possible

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

to make compensation for the evil already done. We shall come to know what to believe about the infinities and the eternities when we have begun to do what is right in the house in which we live and among the people with whom we associate.

Dogmatism, where positive assertion is presumptuous, often obscures the vision of those who are longing for certainty concerning the fundamental realities of life. It begins usually by reversing the order as to what is essential to Christian character. The first inquiry should be not "What shall I believe?" but rather, "What shall I do?" Those who begin by asking what they shall do are not long left in darkness as to what they should believe. Why do so many make this mistake? Has it come from Paul's answer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If so, it has been the result of a grievous misinterpretation of the apostle's meaning. He put no creed before that inquirer. His words imply only this, Trust yourself to Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. He required no knowl-

The Inward Light

edge of the person of our Lord, no theory as to His preexistence or His metaphysical unity with the Father. Paul's conditions of salvation were purely practical. The tendency to put dogmatism in the place of action never came from a correct interpretation of this or any other passage in the recorded utterances of Paul.

"But we cannot compel our beliefs, therefore we are not responsible for them. We admire the character of Jesus, and we would like to be like Him; but when we are asked about His sinless birth, about His rank in the Godhead, about incidents in His history which seem incredible, we are confused. If you were telling us that a man is a Christian when he tries to be like what Christ was, and trusts God for the rest, we could understand that." That is just what should be said always and everywhere, for the simple reason that it is the only teaching that most persons can comprehend. Few of us are metaphysicians. Intuition does more for most men than logic. Christianity is not believing something; it is

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

being something. Right beliefs are essential to spiritual living, but they are the fruit of holy character—rather, the roots out of which it grows. Be good, as you know what goodness is, and your creed will take care of itself. These considerations are fundamental.

“What shall I believe about prayer?” There is but one rational answer. Be good, and you will know. “What shall I think about the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Jesus?” Be good first, and you will sometime have the true belief—if it be essential that you should have it, which I doubt very much. “But how about the miracles?” Seek goodness, and you will find that no miracle in all history is comparable with that of a holy character. “But how about the Cross, and the Sacrifice by which we are taught that salvation is secured?” Learn to sacrifice yourself, in order that you may ameliorate the condition of your fellow men, and the necessity and universality of sacrifice as the means of human elevation will quickly appear.

The dogmatic habit not only reverses the order

The Inward Light

of nature in spiritual growth; it also cultivates a state of self-complacency that is hostile to clear thinking. That was a wise remark of Ruskin, in his "Essay on the Mystery of Life," in which he said that the best work in the arts had been done by those who knew themselves to be wrong—that is, by those who understood that they had something to strive for, yet who were sure that their purpose was right. Dogmatism leads to intellectual conceit. He who thinks himself wise strives neither to learn nor to improve. I have sometimes thought that dogmatism is the infirmity of slothful minds; that those too indolent to think, endeavor to make compensation for their indolence by arrogance of assertion. Such conceit is the exact opposite of the temper which Jesus inculcated in the Beatitude about the meek inheriting the earth. Light shines for those who are willing to look within; who realize that God, duty, immortality, are subjects too great for syllogisms and epigrams; who are honest enough to confess ignorance, and humble enough to receive truth,

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

however revealed. Dogmatism comes about as near to the unpardonable sin as most persons ever approach.

A still more vital hindrance to spiritual sight now emerges: it is the impossibility of forming any adequate conception of the personality of God. This is a comparatively new difficulty. It is largely the result of the advancement of science and the expansion of the universe as an object of knowledge. When the conception of the universe did not exist, and the Deity was regarded as a sublimated human sovereign, the Divine personality was easily comprehended. But what does the personality of God mean now? What is the universe? Does it signify anything definite to our thought? Is it not mere inconceivable vastness, in which reside immeasurable energies? What is personality when applied to infinity and eternity? Does not its usual attribute of individuality disappear? And who shall explain how there may be personality and yet no individuality? The true spiritual life must be the harmony of the individual with the universal—a

The Inward Light

thought which I can only vaguely comprehend. To those who are seeking for a basis of faith, and who have decided that at least they will be perfectly honest, these are perplexing problems. They cannot be evaded or their difficulty minimized; they must be answered, if life is to be more than a mockery. Happy that inquirer who is early taught that faith is inevitable; that, sooner or later, all men will reach a point where attempts at physical sight and philosophical inquiry alike are in vain, and that nothing remains but the adoption of such a working hypothesis of life as will satisfy the rational and moral powers in their hours of deepest need. From this point faith must be the guide. Faith is not a violation of reason; faith is the supreme effort of reason. It is believing in the best, because nothing less will satisfy the soul. Increase of knowledge, for the time at least, has become a hindrance to spiritual vision, because it has opened spaces and immensities too vast even for speculation to penetrate. When we become accustomed to thinking in

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

the terms of the new science, this obstacle will in a measure disappear. For those who have learned to trust, when their intellectual faculties can read no farther, the light has already begun to dawn. They have the vision of faith.

Another condition which obscures spiritual sight is the absorption in things which are seen, which is inseparable from our present state of existence. The struggle to live necessitates concentration of attention on things physical. Spiritual realities have little chance to penetrate the minds even of the best of men. The consequence is that a habit of thinking and conversing about subjects of minor importance is cultivated. Meetings of leaders of the churches are more for discourse concerning the administration of institutions than about saving people from a vicious environment and the sway of ignoble ideas. Committees are appointed having as their object how to do things which are of no great importance; but there are few committees inquiring how to reach those who are living as if there were no

The Inward Light

God. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The most of the best men and women are absorbed with pleasure, with plans for getting richer, with efforts to make their way, with what others think about them, with a thousand commonplace and unworthy schemes for self-exaltation, rather than with the most important of conceivable quests, the knowledge of God and the way of life. Commercialism dominates the time; its spirit is in the air. The things which are seen all know to be temporal, but few realize that the things which are not seen are eternal. It was said of Moses, "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." How many see Him who is invisible, the Fountain of Being, and the One on whom all are dependent?

This absorption in things seen is the characteristic of no class or community or land. It is everywhere. He who has no time to meditate on the unseen, need not wonder that to him it appears unreal. The vision of the unseen is for those who are willing to make the effort to explore the darkness. What mortals we are!

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

We are hurrying toward an inevitable end, and yet most of us live as though this physical life would continue forever. We listen to the appeals of truth and right, and we think more about how we shall invest the coupon of one bond, than how we may get into vital connection with the only really great motive for holy conduct.

The keeper of a lighthouse, in order that the light may not be dimmed, polishes his glass until its surface is translucent. The man of business watches the markets, investigates credits, keeps his eye on the "ticker" almost every moment, in order that nothing may impede his business. Yet most people seem to think that all that they need to do for their spirits is occasionally to attend church, and at all other times systematically to neglect all that appeals to their higher natures.

If the mighty wave of spirituality which in the opening years of this century seems to be moving around the world should leave any particular place untouched, it would not be altogether surprising. Men are absorbed in other

The Inward Light

things. They are not expecting spiritual inspirations. They do not really wish them. They are not willing to pay the price for them. They will not pray, "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." An answer to that prayer would mean a revolution. We keep up the mad competition for what we do not need, and the light is obscured.

But still the question presses. Is there nothing which can be done to remove the obstruction and to let in the light? Does a strange spiritual yearning enter our minds, and an intense desire to be right take possession of our hearts? What shall be done? The people who are members of churches, or at least who are in attendance on their worship, what may they do? They should be willing to do anything to win the supreme prize of life. Are they willing to be poor, for the sake of being good? to be obscure, if in lowly places they may find the truth? to be satisfied to be unknown, if thereby they may the better serve their fellow men? Is not the goal worthy of

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

the endeavor? At least all may be honest with themselves, and put away every appearance, much more every fact, of evil. What a glow rises in the heart of the man who dares to do this! It is like lifting a curtain and allowing the sun to sweep into a dark room. He who, looking into his own heart, finds therein no lecherous imaginations and no selfish desires, or who even devotes one day to earnest effort to serve his fellow men, will find at least a little light falling on his darkest problems.

Unwillingness to do this is the greatest of all spiritual hindrances. What the world needs more than anything else is the witness of really good men. It trusts all whom it believes are seeking to live the righteous life; they become reflectors for the Divine light.

Those who are placed in positions of influence should devote themselves in a broad, generous, and constructive way to the study and the interpretation of truth, so that the reason and the moral sense of intelligent inquirers as to the religious life need not be antagonized. If it be said that truth is truth, and that it

The Inward Light

will submit to no compromise, the reply is, Exactly so; but the practical questions concern interpretations of facts, rather than facts themselves. Differences between earnest souls usually have to do with theories rather than truths. If no man would ever teach what his heart in its best moments condemns, diversities of interpretation would soon disappear. Many become confused as to their logic, and then, when the intuitions of their hearts open a clear path to reality, they do not dare to pursue it to the end.

A rational interpretation of a truth ought always to be preferred, even though all the traditions are on the other side. A statement of doctrine against which a man's moral sense, or his reason, rises in protest, can never be true for any man. A written word is far more likely to be misunderstood than a moral intuition. Only the largest and most satisfying of all possible interpretations of the life of man, of his duty, of his relation to his fellow men and to the universe, can satisfy a soul filled with a passion for reality. He who is able to

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

present the changeless facts of the moral order so that the hearts of men shall respond to them as true, will do more than any mere evangelist to hasten a spiritual awakening which will purify the thoughts and ennoble the characters of men. Moreover, there is need that attention be withdrawn from the mint, anise, and cummin of rights and liturgies, of creeds and ceremonies, of miracles and forms, that it may be fixed on the everlasting realities which alone can satisfy souls which think and aspire. Are we like grist in an infinite mill whose wheels roll on forever? or the puppets of a heartless process in which resistance is vain? or are all men and things under the eye and in the hands of Love, escape from which is impossible? Vengeance is foreign to the universe. The conception of the punishment of a finite individual as lasting forever comes very close to the negation of God. Whether I understand it or not, the heart of the universe yearns for every "barefooted beggar boy" as a mother yearns for her offspring. When these truths, and the like,

The Inward Light

are appreciated, it will be difficult for any to think lightly of themselves, of their fellow men, or of the One whose mercy underlies both life and death.

Rational beings ought ever to seek for a true perspective in their thinking, because only thus can they see things in their proper proportions. A motive mighty enough to revolutionize individual character and social conditions will never be found, unless the present life is seen against the background of eternity, and until men think of themselves as spirits destined for an endless existence. The end of culture is that all things may be seen in their proper proportions and relations, and that no one shall make the mistake of regarding the transient more highly than the permanent. To know one's self as a spirit, and akin to God, is the end of discipline. He who realizes this can never be content with animalism, which is from below, or with wealth, which cannot endure. The awakening which is most needed is one which will fill men with a great consciousness that they are spirits,

Hindrances to Spiritual Vision

and that every spirit is intended to be a sanctuary for the Deity. On the Continent of Europe are cathedrals which lift their spires and pinnacles toward heaven; through their windows ineffable splendors pour; their chapels and altars contain rude suggestions of everlasting realities; and through their doors and along their aisles in rude disorder move crowds of vicious men, curious women, and dirty children. The buildings begin and end in the cross, but the throngs within are as heedless of the spiritual significance of those chapels, altars, ever-burning candles, crucifixes, and of that uplifted Christ, as most who live in this busy century are of the meaning of aspiration, of the feelings of dependence, of conscience, of the soul's deepest love, of the longing for forgiveness, and of the quenchless desire to know what follows death. These all point toward God, "the eternal goodness," and to the life of growth and peace; but we careless men, meanwhile, are thinking of what will please the senses, satisfy ambitions, and make existence a long and drowsy lethargy.

The Inward Light

Our higher natures are far too often ignored. The age needs not emotionalism, denominationalism, mere intellectualism, but a deep and genuine realization that men are the children of God, who is a Spirit; that they are intended for truth and love, and for growth forever and forever toward the infinite perfection. Thoughts like these ought to inspire even the lowest and least intelligent with a passion to be what all men were evidently intended to be. Then would our complex life be lifted above the swamps and miasms of vice and sin into that purer ether, and beneath those cloudless skies, where the soul may see God, and so begin to realize even here somewhat of its immortal destiny.

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

CHAPTER TWELFTH

Conditions of Spiritual Sight



HERE is light in every soul; but all souls are not able to see. The mystery of the Inward Light is explicable only on the hypothesis of the indwelling of God. And why some are blind even when that light is brightest, is a puzzle to all who do not recognize that even those in whom God dwells possess a sovereignty of their own. The object of this chapter is to show that spiritual realities may be discerned by all human beings, and that the differences between men in this respect are caused not by the amount or the clearness of the light possessed, but by the varying degrees of willingness to conform to the conditions of clear-seeing.

How does spiritual sight differ from physical sight? It is not the same, yet the one is analogous to the other. All light is invisible; it is

The Inward Light

the medium in which the objects become visible. It is a means, rather than an end. The flush on a mountain's cheek, as the dawn approaches, is not light, but the color of the ice or the rock as it appears before the darkness has entirely gone. The brightness which brings a thousand figures into intense and vivid relief in a desert at noon is itself visible to no one. As the light in which the eye of the body sees is itself unseen, so also no one has ever seen spiritual objects become physically visible. Physical things have physical discernment, and spiritual truths are apprehended only by spiritual eyes. It is written that no man can see God and live. That means that no one can see Him with the physical organs; many have discerned Him with the eyes of their spirits.

What are the spiritual realities which may be detected only by the spirit's eyes? Spirits think, love, choose. They have power; but they manifest it in thought, volition, affection. Truth, duty, aspiration, inspiration, belong to beings having their places in the

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

order of spirits. By spiritual sight one beholds duty, discovers truths, is made to appreciate the presence of other spirits. There is a wide difference between individuals in their ability to discern spiritual things. What causes the difference? Not the objects seen, for those are unaffected by the observer; not the light, for that is constant. The difference is in the persons trying to see. The conditions of such vision are subjective. There is a relation between body and spirit, and each affects the other; yet our problem has to do chiefly with the mind, the will, and the affections. It concerns the body only so far as the spiritual faculties are dependent on the body. What is the spiritual sight? It is the faculty of seeing truth, beauty, righteousness—these things which proceed from man as a personality rather than from man as a being in a physical organism or environment; and the Inward Light is the medium in which these realities are revealed. That there is such a light the earlier chapters of this book have shown. Because of its presence in the soul, each man is

The Inward Light

responsible for his own spiritual condition. Unless there is some organic defect in the personality, those see who are willing to see, with the eyes of the spirit. Yet it must be granted that as some are born physically blind, so others from birth are spiritually blind. Then, of course, responsibility is lacking; but such cases are exceptional.

Those who would have spiritual discernment must keep themselves in an intellectual and moral condition in which vision will be possible. Indeed, it may be said that spiritual vision is dependent on the ethical state.

The Inward Light reveals things as they are. It discloses reality. It follows, therefore, that willingness to face reality is the primal condition of spiritual sight. The Inward Light covers up no deformities and conceals nothing that is untrue. It shows things as they are, and not as one may wish to have them. Desire and reality are in almost hourly collision. Reality means the exact truth. How many are ready for the truth concerning themselves, their plans, their conduct, their character,

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

their ideals, their associations, their thoughts, their creeds? The tendency toward self-deception is subtle and constant. Those who are really anxious to exploit the truth about others are often swift to conceal it when it concerns themselves. But the Inward Light is a searching radiance. In it nothing can be hidden. It detects all points of weakness, discovers every cherished delusion, and, unmasking many a so-called saint, shows that there is in him the heart of a tyrant and the temper of a fiend. Is one willing even to be condemned because of his passion for reality? To him shall the vision be given. Willingness to face the facts concerning our beliefs, desires, ambitions, characters, is a necessity laid upon those who would penetrate into the inner meaning of things and know the ultimate truth and duty. A passion for reality never fails to be rewarded. It submits to humiliation in order that at last it may be stronger. The confession of faith of a man with such a passion may be very short, but it will be explicit and vital. A creed with one

The Inward Light

doctrine, clearly and strongly expressed, is always vital; but a creed with many articles about which there is uncertainty is "like sounding brass." Is one willing to know the truth, however revolutionary it may be? Then the process of revelation will begin. Prejudice and external authority will be discarded; fleshly desires will be suppressed; the body will be kept under; the eyes of the soul will be lifted, and will begin to look out of the windows—if they are clear enough. But there is the rub. The mind may be eager to see, yet the windows may be dark. The clearest sight cannot penetrate a clouded glass.

A pure mind is a condition of spiritual sight. The word "pure" conveys two meanings, both of which are important. It signifies moral purity and singleness of aim. The latter implies freedom from all that might distract, as when a man looking at one object is not confused by the intrusion of any other object. In this sense pure signifies unalloyed, unmixed with foreign substances. "Moral purity" is a phrase that has a definite significance. "Blessed are the

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

pure in heart, for they shall see God ”; which, being interpreted means, Blessed are those whose thoughts are free from the fascinations of the flesh. The spiritual quest is not for those whose minds are full of impure images, and whose senses burn with unhallowed passion. Such persons do not wish to see the truth, because with them the proportion of things is distorted; they are fascinated by physical desire as a bird may be fascinated by a snake. Impurity quickly monopolizes the mind and clouds the eyes of the spirit. Sensuality is baleful because it deadens the faculties and weakens the mental processes. When voluptuous features and siren forms are clamoring for recognition, when insidious suggestions are knocking at the doors of the will, the modest and peaceful faces of virtue and truth receive scant attention. Perfect moral purity is a condition of a clear vision of truth and duty, but, alas! what a condition! with the vestiges of the animal nature still clinging to us, and the enticements of a tempting environment on every side. Nevertheless, whatever

The Inward Light

the attraction, the windows through which the spirit looks must be kept free from taint, if the vision is to be unimpaired. Sir Galahad, the stainless youth, was the only one of Arthur's knights who saw the Holy Grail; and the Apostle James has said that pure religion, in large part, consists in keeping one's self unspotted from the world. He who has been stupefied by the "wine of the sense" requires no description. His lecherous eye, sodden face, and rotten voice are too well known. He comes perilously near being a body with a dead soul. Of such men the world sees fewer every year. Sometime they will be only a memory; while the clear vision of him whose prayer, "Create within me a clean heart," has been answered, will forever remain an organ of knowledge, a source of prophecy, and a fountain of holy character.

A loving heart is a condition of spiritual sight. Tennyson has expressed a profound truth in these lines from "In Memoriam":

*"In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,*

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

*Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.*

*"They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest ;*

*"But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within."*

—Canto xclv.

Bitterness and enmity darken the mind and harden the will. The intellect is not the only organ of spiritual vision. Some objects are discernible only by the heart. A mother's love will detect that in her child to which all other persons are blind. A woman, through the very simplicity and innocence of her affection, will often predict in her unconscious thought the possibilities of the man to whom she is devoted. Love may be an organ of knowledge, "Only the good discerns the good" (Mrs. Browning, "De Profundis"), and only love discerns love.

The Inward Light

“My spirit is at peace with all”—that means, in loving relations with all. Selfishness monopolizes the powers and faculties, and enmity crowds out the finer feelings. If one hate his fellow men, he will dwell upon his hatred day and night; it will make him suspicious, unjust, ungenerous, and there will be left none of the inward peace essential to spiritual discernment. An unloving man does not believe in love. If he fail to detect it in man, he will not find it in God. If he will not forgive his enemy, he will not even ask whether God will forgive him. God is love. How can one who hates, appreciate Infinite love? The profoundest of spiritual truths is the following: The universe is pervaded by love; its forces are in the leashes of love; the winds blow, the lightnings flash, the tides move, the seasons alternate in obedience to love like that in human hearts, but vaster. This fact only loving hearts can appreciate. Hate is blind to the glories of this high realm. Christianity is the spiritual interpretation of the universe, and its every syllable spells Love with great cap-

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

itals. Our heavenly Father, our Saviour, the Cross, the spiritual leadership, the golden rule, the new commandment, the immortal life, these are but phrases which bend and stagger under a burden of unutterable love. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." (I John, iv, 20.) The vision of the humble man whose heart, at peace with all, thrills with love, penetrates farther into the eternal mysteries than the clearer mental eye of the selfish philosopher. Who shall tell us the most about God? Those who have learned most about love. The only way to learn this lesson is by loving. The Inward Light shines with morning brightness in the soul of him whose spirit is at peace with all."

Tennyson, in this passage, has suggested another truth which is equally fundamental:

*"The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest."*

He who would have a clear spiritual vision has need to be in right relations with others;

The Inward Light

and he must be also at peace with himself; he must dare to look into his own heart and “tumble up and down what he finds there.”

The man whose conscience is perturbed and whose memory is full of salacious secrets is self-centred. He has neither time nor inclination for either the outward or the upward look. A burdened conscience is a tyrant. He who would clearly see with the spiritual eye must be in a state of inward equipoise. Harmony and calm are indispensable. He who has to deal with a troublesome conscience has time for nothing else. He who tries to make himself believe that a lie is the truth, and that what he knows to be wrong is right, has a hard task. He finds a second sin necessary to cover up the first, and that adds to the anxiety and disturbance. Under such circumstances the attempt to discover spiritual realities is like trying to make calculations from the stars when the horizon is full of clouds.

But reverse the process. Let all that is foul be banished from the memory; let every act of wrong that ought to be confessed be confessed

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

to the one to whom confession is due; let conscience be faced and its demands granted. The change will be like that which follows when a mountain wind blows over a humid landscape. Objects formerly indistinct or hidden will stand out in clear relief. Light is waiting to break into all dark souls. What needs to be done in order that they may see? Let one converse with himself somewhat as follows: Have I injured anyone? Then I will make acknowledgment so far as is wise, and reparation so far as is possible. Am I following an evil course, or clinging to an evil habit? Is there anything in my conduct about which I am doubtful, and which is not essential to my welfare? Then I will put that away also. Am I getting profit or pleasure at the expense of the best interests of any other human being? At any cost, I will give up that profit and that pleasure. Once and for all time I am resolved that I will be right, whatever the sacrifice and whatever the effort required. If, after such a course has been pursued, all of truth that is needed is not evident, it will be because of something

The Inward Light

unfavorable in the environment, or of some defect in the personality, for which the man himself is not responsible.

Not all who conform to these conditions will have spiritual illumination, for many times a diseased or an overworked body makes existence a burden and vision an impossibility. Not a few have been too tired to know or care what they might see, or whether they could see at all. Such persons are in good hands and will not be judged unkindly. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

I have not meant to intimate that those who observe these conditions will be able to accept in their totality, or even in large proportion, the doctrines of any of the creeds. The creeds all have something that is true. It is that element of reality which has won for them acceptance in spite of the error which they contain. They are condensed statements of truths of which many souls with widely differing experiences have had glimpses. No one beholds truth or right in their fulness, but each one may have all the certainty which he

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

needs ; he will have light enough to discern the path in which he ought to walk. This is all any need to know. Shall we not go one step further, and confess our faith that if a person observing these conditions still has no clear vision of what is essential to righteous conduct and holy character, it is because the gracious Providence, on whom we are all dependent, has some other and better things in store for him? Each man should remove the obstacles in his own personality which obstruct the light, and then be faithful to whatever vision may be graciously granted him. It is the prerogative of none to pass judgment on what the Inward Light discloses to their fellow men. Use of the light already possessed is a condition of more light, and ampler illumination is the sure possession of all who are loyal to what is already known of truth and duty. The continued use of powers and faculties develop them. Muscles are hardened by exercise. A sailor on the lookout signals "A ship ahead!" He has caught a glimpse of a white canvas far away in the driving mist and

The Inward Light

blinding rain. In the meantime the landsman on board has seen nothing. The light is the same for both. One has vision, because he has cultivated the habit of seeing. Those who would see spiritual things should cultivate the habit of seeing; and nothing is simpler. Use the light of to-day; to-morrow the light will be the same, but the eyes will be stronger and the vision clearer.

One has a firm conviction of the reality of the Deity. "Nearer is he than breathing, and closer than hands and feet." Why do some have this vision, while it is denied to others? Because they use the light which they have by nature, and thus quickly come to have more light given to them. Others, because their faculties are blurred, insist that in all the infinities there are no beings more exalted than they have already discovered. From such persons is taken away even the light which they had. He will learn most of the Unseen, and of his daily duty, who has best used the powers which are his by nature. Knowledge of elemental subjects cannot be condensed into

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

propositions and written in books; it must be expressed in terms of life; and life can be interpreted only by life. Experiment at this point is not difficult. The horizon of life is all dark; duty is a dream; hope is dead; even love seems to be a fiction. "Wherefore were we born?" "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." With some minds these doleful convictions are constant and apparently ineradicable. But suppose that we test their value in the following way: An evil habit has been clung to because it has given pleasure; it has troubled the conscience, but been continued. Let that habit be given up. What is the result? A quiet thrill of satisfaction, like the memory of long-forgotten music, creeps into the heart. A little progress has been made, only a little. "There is no love anywhere except in ourselves." Instead of emphasizing "no love," let this misanthropic man begin to serve some fellow-creature. Even a little dog will sometimes strangely brighten a human experience. Give love to a waif, to a friend, to a relative, and ask no return; and if you

The Inward Light

have none of these, give it to a horse or a dog. He who loves, will find that love will open another window in the soul. Someone has done you a great injury and deserves nothing. Go to him, and say: "At the best, things are bad enough in this world, and I, for one, am unwilling to make them worse. However you may feel toward me, whether you care or not, henceforward I shall treat you as my friend." The result will be like the coming of the morning to at least two persons. The light in every man's soul will shine around truth and duty when the shades are lifted and the windows are thrown open. The faculty for seeing increases with use, until he who has long felt as if he were at the very heart of an infinite mystery, suddenly discerns that he has all the light that he needs. Thus he comes at length to find that duty is no dream, that hope is not dead, and that love is the most enduring reality in the universe.

Is the effort for the realization of these conditions worth while? "The things which are not seen are eternal." The enduring realities are

Conditions of Spiritual Sight

spiritual; the powers which rule this world, and which lead in the cosmic process, like truth, right, love, are spiritual. Everything else is either a burden, or may take wings and fly away. A rich man may provide for himself a sumptuous feast, but Thoreau once said that he had dined upon an apple and was satisfied. Riches are not essential either to comfort or to happiness, even in this life; and they cannot evade death. Fame seems the most evanescent of baubles. The other day a man died who a few years ago was one of the most eminent citizens of the Republic, and the newspapers, amid accounts of prize-fights, first nights at theatres, and society functions, grudgingly gave him hardly an inch of their space. Such is fame. But truth, beauty, love, these endure, and grow fairer and fuller with the years. Happy only are those who have fastened their ambitions to ideals which cannot fade. Emerson's epigram, "Hitch your wagon to a star," has passed into the world's proverbs. In less ambiguous phrase Paul said, "Fix your affections on things above." Even

The Inward Light

this, however, is not perfectly clear, for who shall tell us what "the things above" are? Jesus, in words which no one can misunderstand, although the fulness of their meaning may not be easily grasped, lifted a matchless ideal in this beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." He might have added, if He had chosen, "And they shall see all other things of which they have any need to know." The pathway of duty shall be open before them; the reality of love shall not be doubted by them; and they shall catch dim but steadily increasing glimpses of the spheral truth that the round world, and the whole created universe, are forever under the guidance of One who was truly revealed in Jesus Christ. The foregleams of this beatific vision are the glad possession of all who have ceased to do evil and begun to do well.

**The Continuous Leadership of
the Holy Spirit**

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

The Continuous Leadership of the Holy Spirit



HERE are two ways of studying history: one is to read it as if its events were disconnected; the other is to consider those events in their relations. To the superficial student it is a series of unrelated occurrences, but he who looks deeper finds that those occurrences are bound together, and that the world is what it is to-day because of what men and institutions were in other times. History is a record chiefly of the action of hidden forces. Because of them it possesses unity and coherence. From earliest times it has moved toward a definite end. Whenever it began, it started like an arrow for its far-away goal. Often has it seemed as if within the stream of progress there was no order; but sooner or

The Inward Light

later, though there have been many eddies in its current, the river has returned to its true channel and moved more swiftly onward. "Nothing walks with aimless feet." Even those forces and personalities that seem most divergent and hostile cooperate in promoting the common welfare. From its infancy the race has steadily pressed toward the moral perfection of its individuals, and toward harmony among all its members. There have been, and there still are, prophets of degeneration. Von Hartmann declared that this is the worst possible universe; but such sentiments usually indicate morbid temperaments or unfortunate experiences. Philosophers and scientists of the highest rank, poets who are also seers, and most of all those who study history by centuries, are seldom pessimists. With the recognition of evolution as the mode of the Divine procedure, the number of persons who discern the unity of history and the sure victory of righteousness has distinctly increased. The converging lines of human progress are an interesting study.

Continuous Leadership

There has been a gradual amelioration of the human condition. In the childhood of the race men were either savage or weak. Our ancestors once dwelt in huts, roamed the forests and lived like animals. The tribe acknowledged the supremacy of the chief or strong man. Force was the rule; greed was the method; institutions had no existence. In time the hut gave place to the home; the family became sacred; force was succeeded by the rule of intelligence; cooperation, in a measure, supplanted competition. Now, laws have been not only enacted, but also humanized; penalties have been minimized, and strife, which in early days was universal, has become the exception. Formerly, nations were as swift to fight as angry dogs; now, war is the last resort. The Rhine castles help us to measure the rate of the world's advancement. They are no longer scenes of bloodshed, but curiosities which remind tourists of an age forever gone. There is ever-growing brightness in all the human horizon. Lines of growth are slowly converging toward the perfection of the individual and the real-

The Inward Light

ization of brotherhood. This fact needs explanation; and there is no explanation except that which finds intelligence and love in history—in other words, a Divine Personality.

Religion is in the midst of a process of humanization and of spiritualization. The earliest form of religion was the worship of things; not because they were things, but because the worshipper found in them qualities which he did not find in himself. He knew his own life to be transient; he sought something that would not pass away; therefore he bowed before rocks and mountains. The next step was adoration of the heavenly bodies, because they were both splendid and enduring. Fire-worshippers were on a higher level than fetich-worshippers. Then came polytheism, an adumbration of the immanence of God. Who can fail to sympathize with the Greeks, who believed that waters and woods, oceans and forests, were peopled with deities? To their eyes the mountains had voices, the rivers broke into music, and the winds were echoes of divine harmonies.

Continuous Leadership

Another advance was in the direction of ethical and spiritual development. The oldest religious books presented God as the Patron of a tribe or of a nation. The Father Almighty was a conception too vast for primitive times. But the narrower view was a preparation for the broader. The protector of the clan became the guardian of the nation, and later the ruler of the world. A worthy conception of the Deity waited for such knowledge of the material universe as was possible only after geology had read the records written in the rocks, and astronomy had explored the spaces. Science at last has made it possible to think of the Almighty as a Being august, glorious, and worthy of worship.

With the expansion of the idea of God has grown the idea of Revelation. At first the will of the Deity was supposed to have been revealed to a chosen few in one nation; later it was thought to have been made known to elect souls in various parts of the world; but in these days the truth has dawned that the sacred vision may be expected wherever there

The Inward Light

are pure hearts and obedient wills. To-day, in every land, many are listening for Divine voices and looking for Divine manifestations ; and some are even daring to believe that God is speaking now in accents as clear as those in which He spoke to the Hebrew lawgiver and prophets. Revelation is not merely an eternal possibility, but an eternal necessity ; it can be limited to no race, no time, no condition, and to no phase of faith. " No accent of the Holy Ghost is ever lost." This newer religious teaching does not antagonize that of the past ; it rather supplements it. Jesus came to fulfil, and the work of giving more adequate expression to truth will go on forever. The universe, with its immensities and its forces, and history, with its growth toward holiness and blessedness, are manifestations of the Divine which all who will may read. We behold no longer a few sibyls and seers, but a great company of pure souls, who in the splendor of sunsets, in the glory of the midnight heavens, and most of all in the soul of man, are reading a mystic language of love

Continuous Leadership

and truth and power. The old printed Book is not less venerated because it is now believed to be only that part of the universal Bible which has been put into human language, while outside and beyond the printed page is the larger Bible, which yet may be found to contain truths of which even prophets and apostles never dreamed.

Why do all things in human life and institutions press so steadily toward love among individuals and harmony in society? How has it happened that the minds of common men have been lifted to adore the Being who created the heavens and the earth? What has widened the conception of revelation from special messages to a favored few, to communion with the pure and good of every land and time?

The conception of salvation also has been enlarged. At last it has escaped from the mechanical interpretation put upon it by those who thought of the Divine order always in terms of human government. In a former age salvation meant release from well-deserved punishment by some scheme which justified

The Inward Light

the government, at the same time that it pardoned the sinner. Now it is regarded in its profoundest sense, as deliverance from the desire to do wrong; as the reversal even of the stream of heredity—a real new birth. And who shall describe the change of opinion in regard to the results of wrong-doing? An increasing number no longer regard punishment as suffering inflicted by an angry monarch anxious that his dignity should be vindicated or his laws honored. On the other hand, we are learning that remedial agencies are planted deep in the nature of things; that the universe is on the side of all who are trying to rise; and that the very pains of retribution, which are and ought to be endless, are ordained to bring wrong-doers to a better mind.

In these changes in theological thought there is growth, never contradiction. The spirit which bowed before the fetich will more gladly worship the heavenly Father when once He is discerned. Earlier revelations are not invalidated, but rather verified, by the later ones, and salvation from penalty is

Continuous Leadership

merged in the more radical and vital doctrine of salvation from sin.

What has wrought such transformations in ideals, institutions, interpretations of truth? Shall we say that they are the result of evolution? That will depend on definitions. If from our conception of evolution we exclude the spiritual factor, the answer will be inadequate; but if we believe that the power which impels evolution is the Spirit of God, then the reply may easily be accepted. Is the progress of the world in the direction of spiritual ideals to be ascribed to the action of mere force? Then we shall have to explain why and how darkness always opens into light, and why and how that which is unintelligent, and without love, has pressed steadily toward intelligence, harmony, and brotherhood. But it may be said that the universe is spiritual, and that evolution is the movement of a spiritual body along its inevitable way. We must reply, If the race has always moved along spiritual lines toward a goal so nearly divine, then we must assume that the power which is impel-

The Inward Light

ling, or the attraction which is drawing, is God the Spirit. The only hypothesis which at all explains the historic process is that of the presence and power of the Spirit. Who knows but that He may be the essence of gravitation? Who knows but that, in the last analysis, gravitation and love may be found to be identical, the one binding individuals into harmony, the other holding the constellations in their orbits? At least we may be sure that He who created the heavens and the earth has never forsaken them, and that evolution is the cosmic tide sweeping over the universe and down the ages in response to Divine attractions.

We are now face to face with a sublime fact. The Spirit of God is a constant factor in history. He has always led the procession of humanity. He is the Fountain of inspiration, the Revealer of truth, the Cause of progress. History is the record of the Spirit realizing Himself in human life and institutions. If this faith is well founded, What may be expected in the future? There may yet be

Continuous Leadership

expansions of knowledge of which the most sanguine have never dared to dream; other inspired men may be expected; then such visions as ancient seers were not adequate to receive may yet be disclosed; and the future may show such consecration and heroism, such whiteness of soul and such splendor of sacrifice, as were unknown even in the most heroic ages. Literature is the expression of spirit; therefore, as the spirits of men become more harmonious with the Divine, literature will be richer and more evidently inspired. The presence of the Spirit is the prophecy of a time when nations, laws, society, institutions, will become Christian; when selfishness will no longer dominate the social order; when impurity will no longer either cloud the intellect or corrupt the heart; when strife and war will cease, and peace and love prevail.

What should be our attitude in the presence of such august anticipations?

A mountain tends to make a man humble; so does an elemental truth. Let us bow our heads,

The Inward Light

as did Isaiah when the glory of Jehovah filled the temple. We have thought of God as beyond the stars, but He is nigh us, even in our hearts. We have thought of Him as speaking to prophets and apostles, but now we know that He speaks quite as distinctly to us. We have thought of Him as in the council at Jerusalem; let us now think of Him as in the assemblies of waiting souls in modern days.

Who can predict at what hour some new and marvelous spiritual disclosure may be given to the world? "God is about us in our infancy," and through all our days. Moses heard One speaking from the bush; Elijah at Horeb caught the accents of a still small voice; Isaiah, in the year that Uzziah died, saw the Lord; Saul was surprised on an errand of honest but mistaken cruelty; John, sitting by the sunset sea, and turning his eyes toward Ephesus, heard a sound like that of many waters; Luther, in the monastery, learned that the just shall live by faith; Galileo, looking into the heavens, saw that the earth

Continuous Leadership

was moving; Sir Isaac Newton, in the falling of an apple, caught a glimpse of an elemental law; James Watt, in the rising steam, detected one of the deep mysteries of the universe; Morse, by study or by accident, found that language might be made to pass along common wires; Marconi discovered that the currents of the air might be made to thrill with human speech; and still the surprises multiply, and still the mystery by which we are environed seems to deepen. Because the Spirit belongs to every land and time, equally marvellous revelations may be expected to come to waiting souls in all ages. Jesus will never be surpassed because He teaches that no one should be satisfied with less than truth and right and love; but what shall yet be disclosed concerning God and the universe no one can anticipate. Henceforward nothing that is lofty and good will seem incredible.

God will manifest Himself in His own way and with increasing clearness as the years go by. No door or window should be closed. In the reverent consciousness that He besets us

The Inward Light

behind and before, we should endeavor to be ready for the Spirit's voice whenever the Spirit shall speak. Every church and every place of human assembly should be a Pentecostal chamber.

The development of history has been in the direction of the spiritualization both of men and of institutions. Along craggy and often bloody pathways the race has moved, but those pathways have always opened upward.

We seek an explanation of these mysterious and hopeful movements and prophecies. "They are the efflorescence of the cosmic process." If by that be meant that they are the result of mere force, then we must turn elsewhere for an answer. Jesus gave His disciples a far more satisfying explanation. He said that His followers would be under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, who would lead them into all truth and show things to come. The Spirit of Truth was with the fathers; He is with their children; and He will lead the race until all its members shall have reached the fulness of Christ.

Continuous Leadership

This study of the continuous leadership leads to several important conclusions.

The seat of authority in religion is where the Puritans have always insisted it was to be found—in the spirit of man illuminated by the Spirit of God. I have spoken of this subject at length in an earlier chapter. The ultimate authority is within. The Church is not final unless it clearly expresses the Divine will, and each individual must decide for himself whether it does so. The Bible is regarded as the Word of God because it meets this spiritual test. The creeds command assent so far as they correspond with the ideals of truth which belong in every man. There is no escape from this position. It is not “rationalism”; it is recognition of our dependence on the Spirit promised by Jesus. Puritanism began by affirming that every man may come into the immediate presence of the Almighty, and that God alone is Lord of the intellect and the conscience. Puritanism had a rational basis. What is true? You will find your answer only in that silence where the Spirit of God bears

The Inward Light

witness with your own spirit. To that bar the creeds, the Church, the customs of the time, and even the Bible itself, always must be brought. All that shines true in that Inward Light will endure; all else will perish. The court of final appeal is to the God who dwells within every man; who speaks in every soul; whose judgments, if they were heeded, would leave no one in doubt as to the truth needed or the duty required. There is need for peculiar emphasis on this message now. Men are asked to accept teaching which violates reason and their moral sense. Many who wish to be loyal to truth do not altogether believe the creeds to which they are asked to subscribe. They know themselves to be religious, and they need the help of the Church. Shall they be excluded, and told that they are false to God because they are true to themselves? Rather let us say that no one who is true to himself can be false to God; let us insist on the duty of loyalty to the Inward Light; let us affirm, what most of us believe, that in the last analysis, each man, after having submitted him-

Continuous Leadership

self to Divine guidance, must decide for himself what is true and what is right. Is this saying that each man must be a law unto himself? It is teaching rather that the Divine life in humanity will manifest itself through each man's individuality; and that the God who reveals Himself through the consecrated scholarship and holy endeavors of men of the twentieth century of the Christian era is the same who spoke in the silence to Elijah.

The continuous leadership of the Spirit necessitates frequent changes in creedal statements. It shows that the idea of a creed as a finality is absurd. A creed is a statement of what a body of Christians believe at a certain time. Few men at the age of seventy would state their beliefs in the same terms in which they stated them at twenty. As the faith-formulas of individuals change, so must those of the churches change. Creeds ought to be adjusted to the governing thought of the age. For centuries after Christ theological thinking was in the terms of Roman law, but now it is

The Inward Light

in terms of life. Natural law was regarded formerly as an arbitrary command, with a penalty attached to it; the phrase now suggests the observed order of vital movement. Salvation, which formerly implied escape from penalty for breaking a statute, is now relief from the evil consequences which follow a violation of nature. The ideas are not contradictory, but they are different. In our day men think of God as pervading the universe, but in the time in which the early creeds were written the conception of the "universe" scarcely existed. Why do so many ministers continue to preach in terms of statute law, while the more intelligent of their hearers are thinking in terms of life? The Spirit of God inspires the scientist, and the scientist's discoveries modify theological thinking. If we must have formulas of faith, let them be written in intelligible language. If this were done now, nearly all of our present denominations would cease to be, inasmuch as they are largely survivals of controversies which could not arise to-day. The creeds of a hundred years

Continuous Leadership

ago are not the creeds really held by modern denominations. Who shall put into reverent words the beliefs of our most spiritual men? Who shall write the new creed? It ought to be written. Without trying adequately to formulate it, I venture to enumerate the following as a few of the truths which it should contain:

A Person pervades and transcends the universe; He may be interpreted in terms of Fatherhood; He is truly revealed in Jesus, the Christ; history is the progressive realization of the Divine ideal for humanity; God's will for man may be found in every human soul, and all should dare to read and trust what is written there; happiness and blessing follow obedience to the law of God, and misery its disobedience; death is but a change in the mode of existence; sometime all men, by God's unmerited grace, will reach the stature of the fulness of Christ; the kingdom of God will fill the earth. Along some such lines as these, it seems to me, the creed for to-day should be written, but no man can tell the terms or the

The Inward Light

language in which it should be formulated to-morrow.

But there is one article in the creed of the ages which will require little change in the future; that article is this: *I believe in the continuous leadership of the Spirit of God.*

The leadership of the Spirit brings into clear relief the sin of a divided Christendom. Differences concerning doctrine ought not to separate Christians into rival camps. The things which should unite are more important than those which divide. The Church will always be composed of individuals with distinguishing characteristics. If Church union implied that all should be required to accept the same creed, or to worship according to the same rubrics, it would be both impossible and undesirable. Creeds and liturgies will always differ as men differ. But such differences do not prevent Calvinists and Arminians, liberals and conservatives, Baptists and Quakers, orthodox and heterodox, from working together in the civil state, and they ought not to do

Continuous Leadership

so in the Church. The one is no holier than the other.

Growth toward unity is evident.

In spite of herself, Rome is slowly becoming democratic and liberal, and thus partly closing the gulf between herself and Protestantism.

The Evangelical Free churches of Great Britain move together for the objects which they have in common.

The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland have already become one.

The conscience of American Presbyterianism is being pricked by the *Zeitgeist*, which is the Spirit of God, and by a process as sure as gravitation the many varieties of Christians holding the Westminster standards are drawing together.

The various forms of episcopacy are moving toward something; no living man can tell whether it be absorption with Rome or toward Congregational democracy.

The Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians of Canada are closing ranks, and a

The Inward Light

similar movement is visible in Australia and Japan.

The "Pilgrim" churches, dissatisfied with an unnecessary degree of independency, are reaching sympathetic hands toward those who, with them, hunger for spiritual unity.

This movement will surely broaden, deepen, and expand.

Under the leadership of the Spirit a new and nobler conception of the State is appearing. Force and greed, organized to perpetuate themselves, are slowly giving way before the whole people working together for the common weal. The State is not a mere social compact; it is rather a product of the Divine life in humanity. The Church has been called a "Society of Saviours." The phrase should be equally applicable to the State. The mission of one is as truly redemptive as that of the other. This truth is rising like a new dawn on the horizon of history.

In spite of the social and political ostracism of a race which includes men not unworthy of the names of Washington and Lincoln; of a

Continuous Leadership

race whose sons have fought and died to perpetuate the American Republic; in the face of lynching defended, of fraud gloried in, and of the practical denial that God is immanent in the oppressed and the weak, it is not easy to believe that the State is becoming more humane. But the end is not yet. The stream of history has not turned backward. At least a few are beginning to feel the everlasting contradiction between the Spirit of Jesus and race prejudice. A growing number are standing for the higher ideals of the State. They know that to discriminate against any people because of their color is neither wise politics nor decent religion. Those who in the Inward Light have learned the sanctity and the glory of individual liberty, in the Church of Christ will not soon consent to any kind of slavery in the nation or in the world.

The Spirit of God is moving also among the nations, and is teaching that the State which does not regard itself as the servant of mankind is already doomed. The war in Manchuria was a temporary reversal to barbarism,

The Inward Light

but it is not so significant as The Hague Tribunal, which will yet be the Supreme Court of the world. No nation wants war. The world is nearer to the ideals of peace than ever before. It is our privilege to preach the doctrine of the kingdom of God, or the larger nation, whose realization will make war impossible. Turner's picture of "The Battle of Waterloo" is prophetic. The landscape is lurid; the dead and dying lie in heaps; houses are in flames; smoke and blood fill the air or wet the ground; but high in the clouds and slowly dissipating them, clothed in a garment white and luminous, the Christ is approaching; and above all the bloody rivers and lurid clouds of war, above the oppressions of humanity in many semi-barbaric lands, right through the revolution which impends in all autocracies, the Christ is still coming, and with Him bringing the unity of the world and the day of universal peace.

The continuous leadership of the Spirit is the prophecy and pledge of the evangelization of the world. Heathenism dies slowly. Reversals

Continuous Leadership

toward paganism have been frequent, but when the tide of progress has ebbed it has been only to sweep higher. The corruption of cities is depressing; the remainders of barbarism are appalling; but no one familiar with the past can doubt what the issue will be. From the day when Jesus said, "Feed my sheep," the Gospel has found a host of heroic souls glad to be its messengers. The world will be evangelized. No living man can tell what phase of truth will predominate, and no living man need care. Orientals will not become Occidentals in religion any more than in the color of their faces; but the religion which exalts and trusts the Inward Light; the religion of the love and compassion of God, which teaches love and compassion to man, and which reveals at the end of the cosmic process a holy humanity realizing itself in the fulness of Christ—this will never be surpassed. To that consummation, according to their racial characteristics, all men must sometime come. Elemental forces are behind it, and it cannot be defeated. The only question concerns what

The Inward Light

part individuals, churches, nations are to have in the glory of that "far-off, divine event." The continuous leadership of the Spirit of Truth, or the light of God in the soul of man, is coming into clearer recognition as our knowledge of the universe increases and our experience of God deepens. That leadership was seen in the prophets and apostles, in the heroes of the Protestant, of the Puritan, and of the Evangelical reformations, and in the migrations of the Pilgrims who founded on these shores a free Church and a free State. To that indwelling Spirit in all the coming years men may fearlessly commit themselves and commend their work. He who was with the disciples will not forsake their successors of this or of any future time.

*"I fear no more. The clouded face
Of nature smiles; through all her things
Of time and space and sense I trace
The moving of the Spirit's wings,
And hear the song of hope she sings."*

Personality a Prophecy

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

Personality a Prophecy



THE conception of Personality is one of the most universal of intellectual conceptions. It is presumed in conversation, in laws, in institutions; yet when an attempt is made to analyze its contents, the process becomes confusing and difficult. If this is true of the human personality, how much more so must it be of the Divine! Yet the Divine Personality is presumed by nearly all religions, and by most ethical systems, and has been regarded as an axiom by most profound thinkers. It is the postulate of all deep thinking. Who is wise enough to reconcile infinity and personality? That reconciliation will not be attempted in this study. The fact of personality is assumed. Such assumption is no more essential to our present inquiry than to any other line of investigation. It is required

The Inward Light

alike by history, literature, science, and philosophy.

Personality is the most striking fact in all the evolution of human thought. Humanity is not a vast undifferentiated mass; it is made up of individuals, each one of whom is completely a person. This assumption does not relieve us from the duty of definition. Yet how shall we define? Definition by description will be the easiest and most lucid method.

What is man? He is a being whose present appearance is in a body, but who, in reality, is far different from what he appears. He thinks, and the process of thinking does not become manifest in his face; indeed, the countenance may be used to conceal the interior mental activities. He chooses; and no one can tell in what part of the anatomy the will is located. He loves; and there is no resemblance between love and any physical organ. The body is used by an invisible intelligence whose existence no one doubts, although that intelligence is variously defined and explained. This being may lose a hand or a leg, an ear

Personality a Prophecy

or an eye, one or all, and never know that what distinguished him has been touched. He knows himself as thinking, choosing, loving; knows that these processes are independent of the body, and that no one of them can be destroyed without the destruction of what constitutes his manhood. Intelligence, sensibility, will, united in a single self-consciousness, constitute a human personality. But what is meant by a Divine Person? Exactly the same, except that in the latter case the universe is the embodiment—as it were a garment by which the person is both concealed and revealed. It is the organ of personal manifestation.

Is this idea difficult of comprehension? Without doubt; but mere vastness ought not to cause unintelligibility. As a man is a being who inhabits a body, using it for his own self-expression and realization, so God is a Being who inhabits the universe, who manifests Himself through it, and who uses it for the accomplishment of His purposes. The real difficulty in the conception of the Divine Personality

The Inward Light

is that which arises from the immensity of the creation. When we think of the distances on our earth; then remember that it is but one little planet in this solar system; then recall the fact that other and vaster systems are bound together by invisible attractions; that those systems without number sweep through illimitable space, and that of their beginning or ending there is no hint, it is not easy to conceive of the universe as a body in which a spirit dwells. The problem which is faced by earnest thinkers at this point cannot be overlooked and need not be minimized. It is not surprising that some seek refuge in agnosticism; but agnosticism gives no relief; instead, it raises other and more serious difficulties. Without entering upon a discussion of the questions which here arise, we at once begin our study of personality as a prophecy.

The human personality is intelligent, loving, and possesses the power of choice. Intelligence has manifested itself in inventions, discoveries, institutions, administration of affairs, and in literature. This is not only a moral world; it

Personality a Prophecy

is also an intellectual world. "Man is an animal who laughs," but still more he is one who thinks. The marvels of invention grow every day. Human institutions with their amazing complexity are steadily being perfected, and literature is the fine flower of history.

Man is an animal who loves, and love is vastly more than mere feeling; it adds to feeling the element of continuous and growing devotion to other beings like one's self, and of clearly defined self-sacrifice in their behalf. The finest efflorescence of human devotion is seen in domestic affection, in the sacrifices of those who love for loved ones, and in the loyalty of friends.

Also, man is an animal who has the power of choice. No blind force compels his intelligence or his affection. He is freer than the winds, which blow where they list. Pascal, in an oft-quoted passage, has thus spoken of man as a "reed," thinking and choosing; "Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary that the

The Inward Light

entire universe arm itself to crush him. A breath of air, a drop of water, sufficeth to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be more able than that which kills him, because he knows that he dies; and the universe knows nothing of the advantage it has over him."

Sometimes when we commune with ourselves, thoughts like the following come to us: All things other than man have a cause; man alone cannot be simply an accident. He also is in the line of causation. And if he has behind him a cause, it cannot be inferior to himself. If he can think and love and choose, can the fountain of his being be blind and heartless and fettered? If Plato could speculate, Shakespeare trace the intricacies of emotion, and Jesus love beyond even the limit of death, is it conceivable that those men themselves could have come from what in reality is a universal nothing? When we face the Infinite, and ask whether it be personal, its grandeur may make the exception seem to be inevitable; but when we ask if the poets and

Personality a Prophecy

prophets, the artists and architects, the philosophers and orators of all time have merely grown out of the universal "stuff," we are still more confused. It is better to accept the prophecy of personality even though it baffle comprehension.

Once more: How can a Person be great enough to pervade all the spaces, to hold all the stars as in leashes, and at the same time to watch over all the obscure and transitory members of the human family? Such a Being seems inconceivable. Shall we therefore conclude that He is impossible? It is better to think of what love is; of that beautiful devotion which was around us in our infancy, and whose symbol was our mother's arms; of that thoughtfulness which followed us with the years; of the loyalty of wife or child, surpassing speech; of that deep affection which we feel for those near to us, and which leaves the universe desolate when they are taken from us, and then to ask, Could that mother's love, that friend's devotion, that sacrifice, and the deep social hunger in our own souls, all have

The Inward Light

grown out of the ground, as potatoes and cabbages grow? It may indeed be difficult to appreciate the Divine Personality, but to deny it is infinitely unreasonable. The thought of it may be dimly grasped, but it is intensely felt. Of it we rightly say: We cannot understand it, but it must be true. The human personality intimates, even manifests, the Divine Personality—not less perfect, but more perfect, than ourselves—intelligent, loving, free, self-conscious, vast as the universe, enduring as eternity. Before this fact we bow, adoring and wondering, whether we can or cannot prove.

The human person feels his incompleteness. He is ever longing for a great Companion. The Psalmist says, "My soul is athirst for God." Job cried, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" Augustine exclaimed, "Too late I loved Thee, O Thou Beauty of Ancient Days!" A modern author has a chapter entitled, "God, the Home of the Soul." The longing for a supreme Companion to complete our being is one of the most

Personality a Prophecy

familiar and universal of experiences; it is seen in the deep melancholy which pervades the Oriental mind, in the efforts of earnest souls in all ages to find the cause of things.

Mozoomdar, the leader of the Brahmo Somaj, has given up the leadership of his society and retired to the mountains about Darjeeling, intending to spend there many years, possibly all the remainder of his life. When some one criticised him for so doing, intimating that his course was a confession of failure, he nobly replied that it was no failure to turn away from the little thoughts and unworthy ideals of men, and in the solitude and in the silences to hold communion with the eternal realities of which the mountains are the noblest and most enduring symbols. We are ever feeling the presence of One above and beyond ourselves. Homesickness is not unknown among the strongest souls, even within the most satisfying earthly homes. This is a significant fact? Where is its cause and what is its significance? Has this also no meaning? Or is

The Inward Light

it a prophecy? I cannot regard it as other than prophetic.

*"No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own."*—LONGFELLOW.

Hunger implies food somewhere; lungs are the prophecies of air, and light of eyes; the yearnings of the heart imply the possibility of their satisfaction; and the longing of the human personality for worthy and enduring companionship, will be met in what, for want of a more adequate phrase, we call the Divine Personality. Man will have no rest until he finds it in God; the great Companion is prophesied or intimated by every hour of human loneliness.

The difficulties which surround this subject are many. The day for dogmatism on such themes has passed. The interpretation of what is written in every soul all are not able to read, but whether God be realized or not, He is near to us, even in our hearts.

Personality a Prophecy

Inability to realize does not make the Divine presence less constant or less blessed.

Some ancient writers conceived the soul as an æolian harp, which, when blown upon, made celestial music. Is not the presence of the chords of the harp in the souls of men sure evidence that sometime the winds of the Spirit will blow upon them? Should it not be our increasing effort to have this harp in readiness to be touched by those Divine breaths?

Not less clearly does the human Personality prophesy its own immortality. Such subjects in philosophy necessarily belong to the realm of probability, but there are circumstances in which probability assumes the force and emphasis of certainty. As long as there has been any record of human thoughts and aspirations, in some form this inquiry has arisen, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Sometime a scientific answer to that question may be possible. Until then we must walk by faith, but that does not mean walking in darkness. Those who have the light only of the stars

The Inward Light

should be grateful for that; starlight is better than no light.

How does human personality prophesy its own "survival of bodily death?" The elements of personality in themselves are too noble to be regarded as intended merely as food for death. Kant said that there were two things that filled him with awe: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. But personality is more than moral; it is also emotional and intellectual. What beautiful flowers grow out of this root! In one field, that of literature, have appeared the "Antigone" and the "Prometheus," "Faust" and "Nathan the Wise," "Hamlet" and the "Paradiso," "Paradise Lost" and "The Pilgrim's Progress," "The Excursion," "In Memoriam," "The Idylls of the King," "Saul," and "Paracelsus." Faculties that can think such thoughts are a continuous miracle. The response of the earth to the skies in the spring-time is an unceasing marvel. How swiftly grass and shrub, grain and flowers appear when the far-away voice of summer is heard!

Personality a Prophecy

Glorious indeed is the springtime! But literature, art, discovery, invention, are the flowers that grow in the garden of the intellect. The creative power of the human mind is worthy of deep reverence. It suggests an unknown origin.

Quite as marvellous are the emotions. Who shall define them? Spirits which seemed to be shut up in a prison-house of loneliness, without hope of escape, suddenly seem to tread on air; they are as happy as birds; and all because a voice noiseless as that which awakens the light, has whispered a sweet secret in their hearts. They love, and are loved. They will follow that gleam to the ends of the earth, and with it will dare eternity. By it the physical presence is transformed, and the homely face becomes radiant; they have felt the touch of a magic wand. Love is not only the greatest thing in the world, it is also the most beautiful.

And it sometimes seems as if the power of choice were more marvellous than even the intellect or the sensibilities. The hands may be

The Inward Light

chained, but no hand is strong enough to put chains on the will; the limbs may be bound in a dungeon, while the spirit may be climbing the Delectable Mountains or walking the streets of the Celestial City. The body may suffer pain, loss, death, but the spirit will face all dangers, and triumph over them. Courage is a white flower. The will that can inspire a man physically weak, so that, without flinching, he will meet savages, inquisitions, "the ordeal of fire," in the power of simple devotion to truth or loyalty to love, is glorious; nothing more so is ever witnessed on this earth of ours.

In moments of weariness and despondency it seems as if death must end all. Who ever saw a soul? When the last breath is drawn the human drama appears to be ended. But, on the other hand, think of Tennyson and Wordsworth, of Goethe and Lessing, of Milton and Bunyan; recall what men have dared and achieved; remember what heroic and consecrated spirits have walked this earth; does not the question then arise, Is it possible to

Personality a Prophecy

believe that all those now are not living? If death be the final reality, then life itself is a horrible mockery ; and that cannot be.

Personality grows, and up to the moment of the body's dissolution never ceases to grow. The achievements of age are a study quite as inspiring as the achievements of youth. Here are a few recorded by Longfellow when he had passed the limit of threescore and ten :

“ . . . *Nothing is too late,
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles
Wrote his grand *Ædipus*, and *Simonides*
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,
When each had numbered more than fourscore
years ;*

“ *And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
Had but begun his ‘ Characters of men ’ ;
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,
At sixty wrote the ‘ Canterbury Tales ’ ;
Goethe, at Weimar, toiling to the last,
Completed ‘ Faust ’ when eighty years were past.
These are indeed exceptions ; but they show
How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow
Into the arctic regions of our lives.”*

—“ MONTURI SALUTAMUS.”

The Inward Light

How strangely tragic have seemed to be the deaths of many men who have died in their splendid prime! They have passed away in the very moment of their most heroic achievement. Soldiers have fallen in battle; life-boatmen have gone down in the act of giving their lives to save strangers; firemen have sucked into their lungs hot flames, and these all in their brave youth have ceased to breathe. Shelley sang his swan-song at twenty-nine; Keats felt the daisies growing over him at twenty-two; Raphael finished his last picture when he was thirty-nine. At the instant when they are manifesting courage, loyalty, promise of intellectual and spiritual growth, multitudes are called away from the earth. This is a great mystery. The body dies when the spirit, the real personality, is most vital and vigorous. In frequent instances the mental and moral faculties are eclipsed simply because limitations of the body press hard upon the mind. Does not that which continues its growth until it passes from view, prophesy its own persistence under more favorable conditions?

Personality a Prophecy

The personality becomes more vital until the last breath goes from the body. Thus it becomes prophetic of continuous growth. At least positive proof of the impossibility of such continuance should be demanded before any man should accept the gloomy alternative.

Personality is always greater than its product; the maker is always greater than the thing which he makes. The Trilogy of Dante will live forever in the world's literature, but the mind out of which that stream flowed—at first lurid and turbid, then clearer, finally a river of light—cannot be less enduring than the poem. Leonardo's "Last Supper" is slowly fading from the walls in Milan on which it was painted, but those colors have already endured for centuries. It is not easy to think that the mental walls on which first that picture hung were in ruins while the work of the artist was still vivid and splendid.

One day I found among some papers a postal-card on which were written these words: "I was a little tired on Saturday, and remained

The Inward Light

at home to rest for Sunday. Had a good day and good audiences." Not much in that—nothing but a few commonplace words, of no interest to anyone but to myself; but there is the point of the emphasis. The words are there, and would easily endure for a thousand years; the ink would not fade nor the paper wear out. Is it conceivable that he who penned those words and breathed into them the breath of a deathless love, actually and forever ceased to be on the day before Christmas in the year 1901? Then intelligence, love, will—then courage, affection, fidelity, and the fountain out of which these flow—all are less enduring than a card bought for one cent, and than ink worth but a few cents a quart. Thoughts written down will inspire, thrill, instruct, but a mind thinking is far more wonderful; love expressed on paper is cherished more than jewels; but which is the more vital and lasting, the written word or the person loving? Because men are greater than words, pictures, machines, or literatures which will last for millenniums, men prophesy their own survival

Personality a Prophecy

of bodily death—or, at the least, for a period which for lack of clearer information may be called eternity.

Personality is a prophecy of endless growth. It grows to the moment of its departure from the earth. Some of its faculties may weaken, their relative preponderance may change, but the essential personality itself is untouched by change. What sometimes seems to contradict this statement is decay of the body rather than of the spirit. If Mozart in his brilliant youth had been compelled to express himself only through a worn-out organ, even he would have produced wheezy music. There is no evidence to prove that thought, will, affection, self-consciousness, ever die. The body becomes weak, gets full of rifts, finally is laid aside. That is all that we know. Such conditions even in youth occasionally produce insanity, softening of the brain, idiocy. An autopsy on a woman long insane showed a pressure of the skull on the brain. If that pressure had been detected and removed during her lifetime the insanity would have disappeared. So far

The Inward Light

as we know the human personality, it is fitted for growth if the conditions be favorable; and the fact that it does grow, so long as the body permits, is a prophecy that under favorable conditions its growth will continue.

Such arguments as these are not in the nature of demonstration. They are rather the expression of probabilities; they are satisfying only to those who are willing to believe. Who of us can credibly say, "I have seen, or I have visited, that unknown land, and I speak of places and persons familiar to me"? The wisest of men are like those astronomers who study the stars, and from them infer that others unseen palpitate in the immeasurably deeper spaces. The greatest part of our most vital and commanding knowledge comes in that way. Speculation opens the way to discovery. First we have reasons, but not proofs, for certain beliefs; then we use those beliefs, and in due time discover that they lead to reality. But they may fail! Yes, such beliefs may fail, but, because mistake is possible, should we refuse to welcome them alto-

Personality a Prophecy

gether? The trail which I find when lost in the woods may lead into a jungle, and it may lead me ultimately to my home; I must take it, or wander aimlessly in the forest. The voices of my soul all prophesy continuance of being. No evidence of their falsity has ever been found. When we reach cross-roads in the journey of life, and find one guide-board which plainly informs us, "This road leads nowhere," and another guide-board which, so far as legible amid gathering mists, points our way to rest and peace, shall we take the road which surely leads nowhere?

The human personality is being studied in our day as never before. It is a realm in which marvellous discoveries will yet be made. When once its spaces are fully entered, discords cease, and all its voices, so far as audible to us, are found to be harmonious. In various tones, but with increasing emphasis, they utter two glorious truths: "God is," and "Man never dies." These facts are difficult of realization. At first they are accepted, then doubted; but finally they open before those who have

The Inward Light

eyes to see, vistas and visions for which all men have longed, but the full glory of which has never entered into any heart to conceive.

At this point it is wise to turn from the voices which are speaking within, and to listen to the great and manifold music which is sounding without :

"Things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

"I am the resurrection, and the life : . . . he that believeth in Me shall never die."

"In My Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you."

"The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Index

Index

A

Academy, Royal, 83.
Antigone, 139.
Anthology, sacred, 214.
Apostles' Creed, 232.
Augustus, 245.
Augustine, 50, 77, 340.
Aurelius, Marcus, 249.
Authority in religion, 19, 181.
Authority, the ultimate, 155
and ff.

B

Belief, responsibility for, 17,
97.
Bible, authority of, 159, 160.
Bible and bibles, 205 and ff.
Bible, ruling ideas of, 218.
Browne, Sir Thomas, 25.
Browning, Mrs. E. B., 15, 291.
Browning, Robert, 40, 134.
Buddha, Amida, 212, 215.
Buddhistic writings, 209, 212.
Bushnell, Horace, 150.

C

Calvary, 133 and ff.
Calvary necessary to love, 137.
Calvary, inward vs. outward,
146.
Calvin, John, 216.
Church, the authority of, 157.
Church union, 324.
Church membership, 117.
Charbanel, Victor, 129.
Christ, Person of, 175.
Clarke, Prof. W. N., 35.
Conscience, 86, 87, 88.
Constantine, 158.

Confucius, 209.
Creeds, 229 and ff.
Creeds change, 321.
Creed, new one suggested, 241,
323.
Creed, Congregational, 243.
Creed, Apostles', 244.
Creon, 139.

D

Dante, 349.
Degeneration, tendency tow-
ard, 194.
Democracy, 248.
Dogmatism, folly of, 265.
Dogmatism, the infirmity of
the indolent, 268.
Duty, 109 and ff.
Duty, a revelation, 113.
Duties never conflict, 124.
Duties, relative, 118, 119.

E

Emerson, 301.
Emotions, prophetic, 345.
Energy, 48, 49.
Epictetus, 249.
Evangelization of the world,
328.
Everlasting punishment, 21,
277.
Evolution, 73, 102.

F

Faith, 169.
Fenelon, 24.
Fetichism, 308.
Fox, George, 6.
Friendship, 143.

Index

G

Galahad, Sir, 290.
Galileo, 316.
Goal of history, 76.
God, the final authority, 164, 173.
God, expansion of the conception of, 309.
Gravitation and love, 314.

H

Hague Tribunal, 328.
Hereditv, 90.
Herod, 53.
Hibbert Journal, 186.
Hindoo mother, 104, 166.
History, 174.
History the spirit in self-realization, 314.

I

Ideals the same in all lands, 98.
Illingworth, Divine Immanence, 35.
Immanence and personality, 13.
Immanence of God, 31 and ff.
Immanence of God in the Bible, 50.
Immortality prophesied, 343.
Incarnation essential to ideals, 182, 187.
Inspiration, test of, 208.
Inward light the indwelling God, 179.
Insanity, 91.

J

Jasher, book of, 161.
Jesus Christ the ultimate standard, 191.
Jesus Christ divine, 194.

Jesuit missionaries, 171.
Judgment, the inward, 100.

K

Kant, 84, 196, 344.
Keats, 348.
Koran, 160, 206, 209, 213.

L

Leonardo, 349.
Life, Christ's, grows, 247.
Life needs no explanation, 249 and ff.
Livingstone, David, 189.
Lincoln, Abraham, 326.
Longfellow, 342, 347.
Love as old as God, 96.
Love—what she sees, 138.
Love a revelation, 145.
Love in God and man identical, 146.
Love pervades the universe, 292.
Luther, 216, 317.

M

Man, definition of, 334.
Marconi, 317.
Martineau, James, 114, 156.
Meyer, 61, 62.
Moral law and Jesus, 110.
Morse, 317.
Moses, 83.
Mozart, 351.
Mozoomdar, 341.
Müller, Prof. Max, 206.

N

Newton, Sir Isaac, 317.

O

Obedience, 128.

Index

P

Pantheism, 40.
Pascal, 337.
Pentecost, 70.
Personality divine, 13.
Personality of God, 269, 335.
Personality grows, 347.
Personality a prophecy, 333 and ff., 351.
Pilate, 53.
Plato, 338.
Plotinus, 54.
Political duties evaded, 120.
Progress in the future, 316 and ff.
Puritanism, 319.
Punishment, everlasting, 21, 277.
Punishment, remedial, 312.

Q

Quakers, their doctrine of Inward Light, 6, 7.

R

Race prejudice, 327.
Raphael, 348.
Remorse, 100.
Revelation, 309.
Revelation continuous, 175.
Revivals, 261.
Revivals in ethnic religions, 259.
Rhine castles, 307.

S

Sabatier, 156, 179, 196.
Sacrifice pervades the universe, 147.
Salvation, 311.
Shakespeare, 338.

Shelley, 348.
Spinoza, 54.
Standard, the ultimate, 179 and ff.
Standard in religion, 19.
Stephen, E. E., Quaker Strongholds, 6.
State, new ideal of, 326.
Strikes, sympathetic, 150.

T

Temperament in writings, 162.
Tennyson, 51, 290.
Thoreau, 301.
Turner, the artist, 328.
Turner, The Quakers, 7.

U

Uniqueness, 133.
Upanishads, 160, 206.

V

Von Hartmann, 306.
Voices of the soul, 353.

W

Wallace, Prof. William, 186.
Washington, 326.
Watt, James, 317.
Wesleys, 259.
Westminster Confession, 233, 243.
Whittier, 26, 68, 69, 225, 253, 255, 330.
Woolman, John, 83, 84.
Wordsworth, 43.

Z

Zen Avesta, 160, 206, 209.

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